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# Reflection on Teaching: An Ethnographic Study of Preservice Teachers' Beliefs and Practices.

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**REFLECTION ON TEACHING:  
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS'  
BELIEFS AND PRACTICES**

**A Dissertation**

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**in**

**The Department of Curriculum and Instruction**

**by  
Thomasine Haskins Mencer  
B.A., Virginia State University, 1966  
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May, 1996**



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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between preservice teachers' expressed beliefs, their practices, and how they described the two. Particular emphasis was given to factors that influenced the preservice teachers' expectations of students. The preservice teachers were in the graduate year of a five year teacher education program that embraced reflective practice. In many ways, the two preservice teachers conformed to the mold of the typical American teacher in that they were middle class, Anglo Saxon, females who were high achievers from small towns. However, the pair differed in their experiences with diversity.

The preservice teachers' beliefs and practices were determined through qualitative methodologies including participant observation, interviews, audio recording, and field notes. School records, teachers' lesson plans, reflective journals, and students' work were analyzed as supportive data.

Analysis of data revealed that the preservice teachers were closely aligned in their fundamental beliefs about their students and about teaching. Beliefs and practices generally revolved around issues of academics and behavior. Themes that were explored were (1) respecting diversity, (2) independence, and (3) conscientiousness.

The preservice teachers' expectations were influenced by various experiences and factors from early childhood through teacher preparation. Factors identified in this study included influential individuals, participants' sense of efficacy, their perceptions of teachers' roles, family and community, the fourth grade students, the general atmosphere of the school, interactions with each other, and their reflections. The preservice teachers credited the cooperating teacher as having the most influence on their development as teachers.

Results indicated that the preservice teachers valued the pairing that allowed them to become dialogue partners. Pairing and reflection helped them to better understand the students, make changes throughout the semester, and work more effectively as teachers.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs. To put our beliefs on hold is to cease to exist as ourselves for a moment - and that is not easy. (Delpit, 1988, p.297)

In the quest to reform public education in our country, the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices is attracting increasing attention (Isenberg, 1990). As I see it, however, this phenomenon is not new. For, through my eyes, and therefore, through my beliefs, attention was drawn to the matter of beliefs and practices as early as 1949 and certainly in 1968. I am referring to Merton's (1948) "Self-Fulfilling Prophecy" statement, and Rosenthal and Jacobson's (1968) controversial, yet often cited study, "Pygmalion in the Classroom." My liberal interpretation of these prominent works is offered to emphasize the potency of beliefs.

In this chapter, I focus on one of several factors which influence teachers' beliefs and practices; that is, student diversity. In light of projected increases in minority populations, teachers can expect our public schools to become multicultural hubs where racial, social class, and language diversity will be undeniably evident. This means that teachers in the twenty-first century will face more non-White students, increases in cultural

differences, greater gaps in students' readiness for mainstream classrooms, and more disparity in the socioeconomic status of students. Teachers' responses to these differences will be influenced by their beliefs about children and learning in general, as well as their beliefs regarding issues of diversity.

In the past, our country has experienced difficulty educating children from many minority groups. There are many proposed causes of this failure, and I briefly examine several of them in this chapter. By illuminating this history of minority underachievement I emphasize the context into which future teachers enter. I move from this broad discussion to specifics that led me to my research interest and questions.

### **The Educational Arena of the Twenty-First Century**

Rapid and ongoing population changes have produced a new cultural and linguistic mix for our schools (Hadaway, 1993; Ruiz, 1995; Stoddard, 1993). By 2010, one of every three Americans will be African American, Hispanic, or Asian American (Haberman, 1989; Hadaway, 1993). It is projected that in the near future Hispanics will replace African Americans as the dominant minority in this country, and in some states Whites will become a minority group (Kennedy, 1991).

As these major demographic changes become evident in our country (Burststein & Cabello, 1989; Kennedy, 1991;

Murray, 1986) and as the student population becomes more diverse (Hadaway, 1993; Stoddard, 1993), increasing numbers of minority students will not experience success in school (Lomotey, 1990; Murray, 1986; Trent, 1990; Tucker & Mandel, 1986). This means, for one reason or another, the system of public education in America has experienced and will continue to experience difficulty educating large masses of minority race students, particularly African Americans (Lomotey, 1990; Trent, 1990). African Americans are noted here because at present they represent the majority of minority students.

Minority student failure has been verified in numerous educational articles and research reports. Recent studies reported that minority students were more likely than their White peers to be placed in low or non-academic tracks (Grant, 1984); African American students represented only 17% of the public school population, yet they made up 41% of the public school special education population (Jacob & Jordon, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1991); African American students were twice as likely to be suspended from school and were three times as likely to drop out of school as White students (Edelman, 1987; White & Parham, 1990). In addition, teachers' encouragement and expectations of academic performance were considerably lower for African American and Hispanic students than for White students (Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986).

These dismal statistics were similar for other minority students such as Hispanic and American Indian (Nieto, 1992). Delpit (1995) described the educational failure of Native Alaskan children in Western-oriented schools; Coburn, Locke, Pfeiffer, Ridley, Simon, and Mann (1995) delineated public school experiences that have been detrimental to positive self-image of American-Indian students; Gougeon (1993) related high levels of ethnocentrism exhibited by the public school system toward voluntary and refugee immigrants in Canadian schools. Ethnocentrism is blamed for the high ratio of dropouts among nondominant culture students and for their disproportionate placement in nonacademic tracks.

### **Proposed Causes**

Why is more diversity linked with less success? Why has not diversity enriched our existence and exposed us to multiple ways of knowing? Haynes and Comer (1990) propose that if we are to address the problem of underachievement among African American students (and other minorities), we must first examine probable causes. Causes are generally attributed to either family and immediate community factors or school and larger societal factors (Lomotey, 1990).

### **Family and Community Factors**

Family and immediate community factors include low income, under-education, family composition, and attendance

at schools with large numbers of poor students. Many theories have emerged that are closely aligned with family and community factors. One such theory asserts that minority groups are inherently inferior because of their genetic heritage and this accounts for their lack of success in school (Brace, Gamble, & Bond, 1971; Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Jensen, 1981). Proponents of this theory contend that certain ethnic groups lack either the appropriate mental structures or the genetic make-up for high level cognitive or intellectual tasks (Jensen, 1981, 1984).

A second theory, the cultural deficit theory, stresses the importance of environment in explaining the problems of minority education. Proponents of this view believe that because of economic conditions, poor people are unable to share experiences, attitudes, or values that children need to succeed in school (Deutsch, 1963; Orr, 1987; Riessman, 1962). These theorists declare that the home environment of most poor and minority persons does not provide sufficient stimulation for normal development. They note deficiencies in areas such as language, attention span, ability to delay gratification and expectation of reward from knowledge and task completion (Bereiter & Englemann, 1966; Deutsch, 1963; Riessman, 1962).

In summary, many people, including many educators, blame the poor and minority groups for their lack of

academic achievement within America's public school system. Accordingly, the problem is identified as residing within the student or within the student's environment, thereby excusing society and schools as causal agents.

### **School and Societal Factors**

Some theorists believe that school and societal factors contribute greatly to the lack of academic success for minority pupils. These theorists shift the focus of responsibility from the minority groups themselves to the larger society and to schools. Ogbu (1974), Wilson (1987), and, Haynes and Comer (1990) emphasized the examination of the historical association of African Americans and the dominant White culture in order to understand school failure among African American students.

Historically, schools have promoted and legitimized the dominant culture and rejected all other cultures and knowledge forms (Greene, 1993; Hale-Benson, 1986; Kozol, 1991; Ogbu, 1974; Rose, 1989; Stanley, 1992). Rose (1989) stated that class and culture erect boundaries that deny certain populations equal access to America's educational resources. Bowles and Gintis (1976), and, Sleeter and Grant (1986) argued that schools reproduce society's hierarchical division of labor and are used by dominant groups to maintain their dominance. This is accomplished by placing minorities in schools with repressive, coercive

authority structures, and with minimal possibilities for advancement (Bowles & Gintis, 1976).

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) stated that schools contribute to the reproduction of inequality and to the poor performance of minority groups by valuing and rewarding the cultural capital--the cultural elements such as ways of talking, acting, forms of knowledge, and values--of the dominant classes and devaluing that of the lower classes to which most minority group members belong (Jacob & Jordan, 1993). This phenomenon is akin to deculturalization where "an individual is deprived of his or her culture and then conditioned to other cultural values" (Boateng, 1990, p. 73). This is felt in schools when African American and other groups' cultural values are neglected in the school's curriculum (Banks, 1994; Boateng, 1990; Hilliard, 1992; Kitching, 1991; Lomotey, 1992, 1990; Sleeter & Grant, 1988, 1986).

In summary, many educators and researchers suggest that potential for success or failure in our schools is constructed through interactions between the social, political and economic culture, the teacher's expectations and actions, the curriculum and the student. This view places greater, but not sole responsibility for student success on school personnel, including teachers.

### Personal Perspective

I believe that both family/community and school/societal factors contribute to the success or failure of minority students. All factors contribute to shaping educational outcomes. I acknowledge that factors such as poverty and single parent households can influence and contribute to a child's lack of preparation for school as well as lack of success once in school. However, the important consideration is that these alone are not the sole determinants of school success or failure. Teachers' ability, skill, and perhaps especially their multicultural sensitivity and desire to improve the classroom for every child are important determinants of school success as well. Additionally, larger school organizational factors contribute to underachievement of minority students. I refer to factors such as teacher/pupil ratio, aids and materials, testing patterns, teacher collaboration, parental isolation, and tracking.

I have viewed the educational arena from multiple perspectives (e.g., elementary classroom teacher, classroom supervisor of student teachers, college coordinator of student teachers, teacher educator, graduate student, parent). I have been both a participant and an observer. I often introduce myself as "one who wears a variety of hats." For 18 years I was an elementary classroom teacher. I taught in single race schools and in multicultural



settings. For the last five years I have been a supervisor of preservice teachers and a teacher educator. This has allowed me to observe our future teachers in their professional development courses and in their classroom field experiences. In these environments, I observed teachers who promoted academic excellence through their teaching practices. These teachers helped students recognize their potential. They were the foundation and scaffold students needed in order to believe in themselves. These teachers respected their students and their differences. I also observed teachers whose practices demonstrated low expectations for students and intolerance for student differences.

My professional background has allowed me to see social interactions in classrooms. These experiences have also extended my interest in teachers' beliefs and practices. My varying experiences have sparked my interest in the educational achievement of all children, especially of the estimated 40% nonwhite children who will comprise American classrooms in the twenty-first century.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

Reform initiatives, namely, the Carnegie Report (1986) and the Holmes Group Report (1986), have acknowledged the challenge of providing quality education for all children. This challenge must be faced by a teacher force that continues to be majority European American, monolingual,

middle-class women from small towns (Hadaway, 1993; Ross & Smith, 1992). Breault (1995) points out that our teachers are generally: individuals from teaching families; successful in school; and choose to attend college in their region. In most instances, this teacher force has not had exposure to diverse populations. Additionally, these teachers prefer to teach in small towns or suburban schools (Haberman, 1988; Zimpher & Ashburn, 1992). This has been the trend throughout the history of public education and promises to remain so in the near future. Graham (1987) notes, "Most teachers who teach today's children are white; tomorrow's teaching force will be even more so" (p. 599). This prediction, coupled with the knowledge that the student population is changing, highlights the importance of examining teachers' beliefs and practices. I explore this point in more detail in Chapter Two.

The purpose of this study was to examine preservice teachers' beliefs and practices, and how they described the two. For this research I borrowed Pajares' (1993) definition of preservice teachers' beliefs. Pajares defined preservice teachers' beliefs as:

The attitudes and values about teaching, students, and the education process that students bring to teacher education - attitudes and values that can be inferred by teacher educators not only from what preservice teachers say but from what they do (p.46).

This focus was important to me because research suggests that beliefs influence actions (Ashton & Webb, 1986;

Bandura, 1986; Clark, 1988). As I examined preservice teachers' beliefs and practices, I also examined teacher-student interactions. Teachers often expressed and exhibited their beliefs and expectations in the context of teacher-student interactions. Additionally, as Clark and Peterson (1986) noted, teacher-student interactions were often bi-directional or reciprocal.

My study was centered on two preservice teachers from a new elementary education program at a large southern university. The education program was based on principles established by the National Holmes Group. Why focus on these elementary preservice teachers? First, because they were the "new kids on the block." Little, if any, research had been conducted on this particular group of future educators. Second, issues of diversity, reflective practice and research had been addressed more in this program than in traditional teacher education programs at this university.

The two preservice teachers who were selected for this study were White, middle-class females. These characteristics were consistent with statistics that show that our country's teacher force continues to be majority European American, monolingual, middle-class women from small towns (Hadaway, 1993).

The issue of the teacher's race must not be misconstrued to mean that minority teachers ensure

educational success for minority students or that majority race teachers ensure their failure (King, 1993). According to Ladson-Billings (1991, 1994), efforts to increase the minority teacher force are primarily intended to provide role models for minority students and to provide non minority students with a more accurate view of our pluralistic society. Yopp, Yopp, and Taylor (1991) stated, "All children need contact with minority teachers to help prepare them to live and work in an increasingly multicultural, multiethnic society" (p. 37). In fact, there is no conclusive evidence that supports the hypothesis that minority teachers are better for minority students (McDiarmid, 1992).

Many years ago, in one of the first ethnographic studies of schools, Jackson (1968) focused on the elementary school. It was his contention that "during this period the young child comes to grips with the facts of institutional life...and, also develops adaptive strategies that will stay with him throughout the balance of his education and beyond" (p.vii). In addition, Nias (1989) stated, "Primary (elementary) teachers have been given little opportunity to speak for themselves" (p.1). These sentiments encouraged me to explore the beliefs and actions of preservice teachers in the terrain and context of an elementary school.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions dictated the focus of this research:

1. What affects preservice teachers' expectations of students in a multicultural elementary school classroom?
2. How do preservice teachers communicate their expectations for students?
3. How do preservice teachers describe inconsistencies in their beliefs and practices?
4. How do students acknowledge preservice teachers' expectations?
5. How does pairing preservice teachers affect their ability to communicate their expectations of students?

### **Rationale**

According to Clark and Peterson (1986),

In considering teachers' theories and beliefs about students, some researchers have suggested that the most important beliefs that teachers have about students are those that deal with teachers' perceptions of the causes of students' behavior or, in other words, teachers' attributions for the causes of students' performance. (p. 281)

Most research on teachers' attributions and expectations has been conducted by way of teachers responding to classroom scenarios or questionnaires (Ames, 1982; Beckman, 1976; Cooper & Burger, 1980; Silverstein, 1978). This type

of research fails to portray the full complexity of the teachers' task and fails to adequately increase our understanding of teaching (Clark & Peterson, 1986). In contrast, my study was conducted in a naturalistic setting where I was able to "see behavior in context" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.22) and seek preservice teachers' explanations and reflections. Few studies have examined preservice teachers' beliefs and how they guide their teaching practices. Of these, fewer still have employed qualitative methodology. This study addresses the void that exists in the literature and research on preservice teachers' beliefs and practices.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF CRITICAL LITERATURE

This study focused on two preservice teachers from an elementary education program at a large southern university. The education program was based on principles established by the National Holmes Group. The purpose of the study was to examine these preservice teachers' beliefs and practices and how they described the two.

In this chapter I identify and briefly review several topics that are related to my research questions. I begin with a discussion of the basic tenets of traditional and non-traditional teacher education programs. Many educators, and certainly the general public, credit or blame (depending on which is appropriate at any given time) teacher education programs for the quality of the teachers in our classrooms. My review of non-traditional teacher education programs is purposively more extensive than my review of traditional programs. The preservice teachers who were the focus of my study are products of a non-traditional teacher education program that emphasizes reflective practice. Many researchers have noted the role of reflection in helping preservice teachers identify their beliefs.

In Chapter One, I provided research findings and statistics to highlight the extent of the failure of public education to successfully educate the majority of minority

students. With minority populations continually increasing, it is obvious that the public education system will feel the impact. Teacher education programs are addressing this matter in various ways. In this chapter, I expand upon the role of teacher education programs in preparing teachers for more diversity. Teachers in the twenty-first century will face more non-White students, increases in cultural differences, greater gaps in students' readiness for mainstream classrooms, and more disparity in the socioeconomic status of students. Teachers' responses to these differences will be influenced by their beliefs.

In the second section of this chapter, I explore the topic of teacher expectations, an area that some researchers posit holds the keys to understanding teachers' actions in their classrooms. I also present views that suggest that teacher behavior "sustains" student achievement rather than acting as a "self-fulfilling prophecy." In the final section I address teacher beliefs and teacher efficacy, areas that are also closely aligned with teachers' actions in their classrooms. The literature reviewed here includes journal articles, educational books, doctoral dissertations, and conference papers.



### **A View Of Teacher Education**

The National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (1990) requires that all teacher education programs be grounded in a "model" for professional preparation. An examination of teacher education programs may lead to the conclusion that the models and parameters are broad and indeed sometimes uncertain (Doyle, 1990; Valli, 1992a). According to Valli, "teacher education programs are often shaped by issues of tradition, institutional forces, and external constraints" (p. xi) rather than images of good teachers and knowledge about good teaching. There are numerous conceptions of what preservice teachers should be prepared to do and how this preparation should be conducted (Doyle, 1990). Before turning to the specific model central to this study, some distinctions between traditional and more progressive models need to be made.

#### **Traditional Programs**

Traditional teacher education programs have shaped the preparation of the majority of America's teachers for the past few decades (Henderson, 1992, Valli, 1992a). The apprenticeship model (Zeichner & Liston, 1987), the traditional-craft model (Roth, 1989; Zeichner, 1983), and others have been included in the list of teacher education models that are more traditional in nature. Lanier and Little (1986) and Henderson (1992) described traditional

teacher education programs as technical, fragmented, and shallow. Henderson (1992) noted that "a technocratic fantasy has served as the dominant referent for educational practice throughout the 20th century" (p.204).

Traditional programs trained teachers to be proficient in using prescribed knowledge and techniques, and to conform to acceptable patterns of behavior (Kennedy, 1989; Pape, 1992; Wedman & Martin, 1986). Specialized knowledge and expertise are considered to reside with trained educators who guide preservice teachers in acquiring particular skills (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Traditional models encouraged imitation and modeling of the status quo (Zeichner & Liston, 1987), and also inhibited the self-directed growth of preservice teachers (Valli, 1992b). Pape (1992) believed that traditionally trained student teachers' actions and curriculum decisions were often limited by a belief that their role implied imitation. Consequently, in simply modeling or copying the practices of others, preservice teachers often did not understand the reasons behind actions (Valli, 1992b). Additionally, Kagan and Tippins (1991) found that traditionally trained teachers tended to view classroom lessons as information dissemination rather than teacher-student interaction.

Traditional programs are generally grounded in behavioral objectives, instruction interaction analysis, and standardized forms of evaluation which some educators

feel have "contributed to the deskilling and dis-empowerment of educators and to the deterioration of American public education" (Pinar, 1989, p. 12).

### **Non-Traditional Programs**

Many teacher education programs are designed to develop teachers who are able to operate beyond tradition, habit, prescribed skill development and prescribed judgments. Such programs are non-traditional in their conceptual orientation (Doyle, 1990; Valli, 1992b). Some such programs are based on the reflective practice model - a model which aims to integrate essential components of teaching.

### **Reflective Practice Programs**

Many progressive teacher education programs have revitalized Dewey's notion of reflective action by using it as their guiding model (Armeline & Hoover, 1989; Roth, 1989; Rudney & Guillaume, 1989-1990; Valli & Tom, 1988). This renewed interest in reflective practice has also been credited to the work of Donald Schon (1983, 1990). Ross (1989) defined reflection as "a way of thinking about educational matters that involves the ability to make rational choices and to assume responsibility for those choices" (p.22). The concept of reflective action requires the development of attitudes and abilities such as introspection, open-mindedness, and willingness to accept

responsibility for decisions and actions (Dewey, 1933). Several researchers emphasized that reflective action included abilities such as seeing the perspective of others, developing alternative explanations for observed events, supporting positions, confronting ethical and educational issues such as equal access to learning, and teacher responsibility for students' learning (Kilgore, Ross & Zbikowski, 1990; Zeichner & Liston, 1987).

A combination of factors led to the renewed interest in reflective, inquiry-oriented teacher education (Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Valli, 1992a). These factors included the perceived limitations of process/product research that guided most traditional teacher education programs, the impact of cognitive psychology, renewed attention to the moral basis of education, and interest in teacher empowerment (Valli, 1992a). Although variation exists among reflective teacher education programs, Valli (1992a) characterized reflective programs as "committed to curricular reform and reflection on practice in an attempt to make good decisions about complex classroom phenomena" (p.xiv).

The reflective model is intended to prepare teachers who are both willing and able to reflect on the origins, purposes, and consequences of their actions, materials, and ideological constraints embedded in the classroom, school, and society in which they work (Hillkirk & Dupuis, 1988-89;

Roth, 1989; Smyth, 1989; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Schon (1983) stressed that reflective practice is grounded in the practitioner's values, knowledge, theories, and practices. These factors influence the type of dilemmas that the teacher recognizes and the judgments that teachers make. Schon pointed out that reflection is necessary because teaching is characterized by uncertainty, uniqueness, and value conflicts.

Reflective teaching prepares preservice teachers for full participation in educational policies. This involves helping preservice teachers construct working knowledge out of theory, research, values, beliefs, various frames of reference and alternative viewpoints (Kennedy, 1989). Educating preservice teachers in broad, diverse, and sometimes competing ways of analyzing educational problems helps to inform practice and leads to self-directed growth (Pultorak, 1993; Roth, 1989). Incorporated in many reflective teacher education programs is the concept of "praxis," or theory-practice integration (Henderson, 1992).

Hillkirk and Dupuis (1988-89) and Ross (1989) studied teacher education programs that emphasized reflection. Hillkirk and Dupuis (1988-89) studied 150 preservice teachers enrolled in four different sections of an education course. "The Teaching Biography" was a special focus of two of the four sections. The teaching biography asked preservice teachers to articulate problematic issues,

"to inquire continually into and reflect upon the relationship between their ideas, expoused beliefs, and feelings and the degree and depth of consistency between ideas, beliefs, and feelings and their actual classroom behavior" (p. 23). Hillkirk and Dupuis found that the teaching biography fostered inquiry and reflection. Preservice teachers who used the teaching biography were more analytical and reflective. They were better able to confront the complexities of the classroom than were the preservice teachers who did not use the teaching biography.

Ross (1989) also studied written journals of preservice teachers enrolled in the first of a sequence of courses designed to foster the development of reflection about teaching practices. Research findings indicated that during the course, the preservice teachers grappled with significant educational decisions and demonstrated a high level of reflection.

Graduates of programs grounded in reflective practice are more likely to be transformative intellectuals than technician-functionaries (Grumet, 1989; Pinar, 1989; Romanish, 1987). They are more likely to be equipped to function in a dialogical pragmatic manner where they collaborate with their peers to understand and solve their common problems (Henderson, 1992). However, researchers have pointed out that reflective practice programs have not been successful with all preservice teachers. Often

preservice teachers have retained their initial beliefs, orientations and practices despite reflective teaching experiences (Korthagen, 1988). Reagan (1993), Ross (1989), and Roth (1989) noted that the ability to reflect about practice must be fostered by teacher educators through continued training and coaching. Reflection does not fully develop in one course. In fact, Roth (1989) described the reflective process "as a spiral, with one set of experiences and decisions building on the previous ones" (p. 35).

#### The Holmes Group

During the 1980s, numerous researchers, educators, commissions, and coalitions, called for an improvement in the quality of education in the United States (for example - National Commission on Excellence in Education's A Nation at Risk, 1983; Ernest Boyer's High School, 1983; TheodoreSizer's Horace's Compromise, 1984; John Goodlad's A Place Called School, 1984; Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; and the Holmes Group, 1986). Although all reports agreed that schools should be improved, the reports differed in their recommended solutions (Lunenburg, 1992).

The Holmes Group, linked closely to research universities and teacher education departments, recommended the reform of teacher education and the reform of the teaching profession (Lunenburg, 1992; Murray, 1986; Sikula,

1990). The Holmes Report challenged present teacher education programs (Clark & McNergney, 1990), emphasized the professionalization of teaching, recommended giving teachers greater input in how schools are run, and recommended increasing teacher pay (Lunenburg, 1992). A part of the Holmes Group's strategy for change included the elimination of the undergraduate teacher education degree and involvement of the total university in the education of prospective teachers (Freiberg & Waxman, 1990). This required extending the formal preparation period.

The Holmes Group outlined five goals: (a) to make the education of teachers intellectually sound; (b) to recognize differences in knowledge, skill and commitment among teachers; (c) to create honest standards of entry into the profession of teaching; (d) to connect schools of education with schools; and (e) to make schools better places in which teachers can work and learn (Murray, 1986; Sikula, 1990). In most instances, fulfillment of these goals required changes in the structure and content of teacher education programs (Murray, 1986).

### **The LSU Holmes Program**

The Louisiana State University Holmes Program was informed by the tenets of the Holmes Group. However, this program is distinctly designed and envisioned for this institution, community, and state (Louisiana State University Holmes Document, 1994). In designing the LSU



Holmes Program, the faculty of the College of Education collaborated with public school teachers and other LSU school professional educators. This group worked to design a program to prepare teachers for schools of the Twenty-First Century, teachers who would be comfortable teaching all children. To fill this desire, the faculty designed separate and different secondary and elementary programs. This discussion relates specifically to the Holmes Elementary Education program.

The Holmes Elementary Education program is a five year program that culminates with two, semester-long practicum experiences in Professional Development Schools and the completion of a teacher research project. Students in this program earn a bachelor's degree in education at the end of the fourth year and continue in the College of Education as a graduate student for the fifth year. At the end of the fifth year, students receive the M.Ed degree and teaching certification.

The Holmes Elementary Education program is built around the view of the teacher as a reflective practitioner engaged in on-going praxis. A teacher engaged in praxis "is grounded in content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge; uses these understandings as a basis for action; and recursively draws from experience to enhance this multifacted knowledge base" (LSU Holmes Document, 1994, p.21).

Holmes preservice teachers learn in teams called cohorts; they are taught by teams of teachers and professors; and they engage in cohort and peer dialogue "about problematic situations in order to critically consider and decide upon appropriate practice" (LSU Holmes Document, p.16). During the Graduate Year, the preservice teachers work closely with a peer partner. This relationship is an important component of the program. Peer partners engage in joint planning, some team teaching, reflection, and peer evaluation (LSU Holmes Document, 1994). Traditional course titles and course boundaries are not the norm in the LSU Holmes elementary program. Issues that are important and crucial to education are evident throughout the curriculum, not isolated to a particular course (LSU Holmes Document). For instance, reflective practice and attention to the needs of diverse and special populations are infused across the curriculum.

### **School Demographics and Teacher Education**

Some educators and researchers believe that demographic changes will impact public education and therefore present an important challenge to teacher education programs (Carter, 1995; Davidman, 1995; Gougeon, 1993; Hadaway, 1993; Larke, 1990; Reilly, 1989; Trent, 1990; VanBalkom, 1991). According to Reilly (1989), if teachers are to be successful in meeting the needs of diverse students, they must have knowledge and experiences

that adequately prepare them for the task. These sentiments represent a call for multicultural education, a summons made by many others. For example, Larke (1990) stated, "There is a need now, more than ever before, for teachers to become culturally sensitive to the needs of all students, especially to students from culturally diverse backgrounds" (p. 23); according to Trent (1990), "There is a growing understanding that the differences among and between us require special recognition and treatment" (p.362); Zeichner and Liston (1987) and Davidman (1995) proposed that teacher education programs aim to help preservice teachers become more aware of themselves and their environments in ways that change their perceptions of what is possible; Shaw (1993) stated that teacher education students should "engage in experiences that involve the whole person, demand mental and emotional attention, and provoke disequilibrium" (p. 24).

Because of either internal or external pressures, most teacher education programs are reconceptualizing their model for the preparation of teachers. It is important to note that teacher education programs seeking NCATE accreditation must include multicultural education in their program. Many changes in teacher education programs are directly related to an attempt to better prepare teachers for diversity.

Carter (1995), Harrison (1995) and VanBalkom (1991) recommended reformulating every course in teacher education programs. The aim is to make multicultural education an integral part of the entire curriculum including field placements. Other recommendations for teacher education range from a sole multicultural education course that gives specific skills for working with diverse populations to experiential programs that require immersion in another culture.

According to Barrett (1993), "One of the most powerful ways to create a multicultural perspective is through immersion in another culture or experiential educational programs with an explicit multicultural focus" (p. 20). The premise here is that classroom information alone will not change behavior. Barrett (1993) emphasized the coupling of immersion with opportunities for reflection. Some examples of experiential programs are listed here. Bondy, Schmitz, and Johnson (1993) described a program that required preservice teachers to serve as tutors in a tutoring program for residents of a local public housing neighborhood; Larke, Wiseman, and Bradley (1990) reported on a program that required preservice teachers to work in a three year mentoring program with minority elementary and junior high school students; Mungo (1985) elaborated on field experiences in non-school culturally diverse settings such as mental health centers, social agencies, or

correctional facilities; Barrett (1993) explained extensive weekend retreats and workshops with speakers exploring classism, racism, sexism, ageism, anti-Semitism, etc.; Barrett (1993) also discussed overseas student teaching opportunities; and Meade (1991) and Rikard and Beacham (1992) support mentoring of new teachers by experienced teachers who are effective with children from diverse backgrounds. Educators and researchers stressed that all teacher education programs and experiential programs must be coupled with reflective, supportive, interpretive opportunities (Banks, 1991; Bondy, Schmitz, & Johnson, 1993; Breault, 1995).

According to McCarthy (1993), there are variations within the field of multiculturalism with respect to perspectives, assumptions, and desired outcomes. He stressed that most multicultural discourse aims to change negative attitudes toward minorities through sensitivity training. However, McCarthy and others (Banks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lomotey, 1992, 1990) espoused a critical approach to multiculturalism - recommending an examination of the entire school curriculum and organization "with a view toward transformation" (p. 302). McCarthy perceives the problem as not merely existing with teachers, rather as a matter of social inequities in society. Banks (1994), who embraces the transformation model, described it as one that "changes the structure,

assumptions, and perspectives of the curriculum so that subject matter is viewed from the perspectives and experiences of a range of groups" (p.6). Such an approach requires changes in content, concepts, instructional materials, and teaching methods.

### **Multiculturalism and the LSU Holmes Program**

In the LSU Holmes elementary program, multicultural issues are infused throughout the curriculum and discussed in great detail in EDCI 3400, Educational Principles, Policies and Practices for Special Populations. This course addresses multicultural education from a sociopolitical context, orienting the preservice teachers toward critical reflection on issues of social justice, personal perspectives, and cultural identities. Cross-cultural experiences are an important component of this and other education courses.

### **Teacher Expectation Research**

Clark and Peterson (1986) developed a model of teacher thought and action that helped visualize the parts and relationships present in teaching. This model depicted two domains, (a) the teachers' thought processes, and (b) teachers' actions and their observable effects.

Teachers' thought processes occur in teachers' heads and are not directly observable. Clark and Peterson (1986) differentiate three categorizes of teachers' thought

processes: (a) teacher planning; (b) teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions; and (c) teachers' theories and beliefs. The double headed arrows in Clark and Peterson's model indicate the reciprocal relationship between the categories. Clark and Peterson posit that research on teachers' thought processes represents an emerging approach to research on teaching. Teacher expectation is encompassed in teachers' thought processes and is denoted and connoted in teachers' planning, interactive thoughts and decisions, and theories and beliefs.

As I reviewed the literature on teacher expectation, I often found an overlap of factors that were being investigated. For example, many studies that examined race and expectations indirectly looked at race, social class, and expectations. Further, an examination of language diversity, indirectly focused on language diversity, race, and social class. Because of the close link between race, ethnicity, and economic circumstance, I believe that many of the research findings are applicable to various undeclared categories.

Cooper (1983) credits Merton's self-fulfilling prophecy concept with generating initial interest in teacher expectancy as early as the 1960s. Further interest in teacher expectancy was produced by Clark's (1963) research and assertion that teachers often held low expectations for ghetto children, and by Rosenthal and

Jacobson's (1968) highly debated study, *Pygmalion in the Classroom*. Cooper and Good (1983) purported that the study of teacher expectations was central to issues such as the desegregation of minority students, mainstreaming of handicapped students, and teacher efficacy.

Many researchers believe that teacher expectations have at least some effect on student achievement. These researchers have identified determinants of these expectations. Based on extensive examination of expectancy research, Baron, Tom, and Cooper (1985) discovered that teacher expectations were closely related to two prominent characteristics of students - social class and racial backgrounds. These are not the only student characteristics that have been investigated but they have probably been examined most frequently.

### **Expectations and Social Class**

According to Grant and Sleeter (1986), most teachers perceive themselves as middle class and they prefer to teach middle class students. Additionally, teachers tend to see lower class students as both low achievers and behavior problems (Clark, 1963; Ogbu, 1974; Rist, 1970, 1978). For these reasons, teachers usually expect more from middle-class students than from working-class and lower-class students (Clark, 1963; Baron, Tom, & Cooper, 1985; Winfield, 1986). Persell (1977) noted that teachers' expectations are lower for poor students than for middle-



class students even when intelligence test scores and achievement scores are similar. According to Baron, Tom, and Cooper (1985), teachers' ratings of students' academic potential are often influenced by the status of the father's occupation, the father's educational level and the mother's educational level.

Rist's (1970) early study documented that teacher expectations were often related to the social class of students. In this groundbreaking study, Rist found that a kindergarten teacher grouped her students based on an "ideal type" of student. Most characteristics of an "ideal" student were related to social class criteria. In addition to social class grouping, Rist observed the teacher's differential treatment of children based on group assignment. The "fast" learners received more teaching time, more attention, and more rewards than the "slow" learners. In addition, this same pattern continued throughout the next three grades with other teachers. Rist found that the teachers' expectations contributed to the learning patterns that existed in the classrooms.

Teachers' generalized expectations about students from various social classes are based on vicarious and direct experiences( Baron, Tom, & Cooper, 1985; Mavrogenes & Bezruczko, 1993; Weinstein, Madison, & Kuklinski, 1995). Some researchers believe that once formed, these generalized expectations are difficult to change; that is,

it becomes difficult for students to distinguish themselves from the generalized expectations (Baron, Tom & Cooper, 1985; Dusek & Joseph, 1985). Change may be difficult but not impossible.

Weinstein, Madison, and Kuklinski (1995) studied in-service teachers in an urban high school. Results of this study supported teachers' capacity to change their expectations. Their two year intervention research project aimed to raise teachers' expectations about the ability of minority at-risk students entering an urban high school. Teachers' initial perceptions were related to factors that included pessimism about their own efficacy as well as perceived deficits in the students. Over the duration of the study, colleague collaboration enabled the teachers to view their students and fellow teachers more positively. Collaboration was also credited with producing changes in teacher practices; that is, increasing high-expectancy practices. Moreover, students engaged in the project earned higher GPAs and showed greater decreases in disciplinary problems than did the comparison group.

### **Expectations and Race**

Research has established that race is a significant determinant of teacher expectations (Baron, Tom, & Cooper, 1985; Cohen, 1987; Oakes, 1985; Pang, 1992; Scott-Jones & Clark, 1986). As with social class, some teachers formed generalized expectations about race and applied these

expectations to all students of that race (Baron, Tom & Cooper, 1985; Parekh, 1986).

In research on teachers' expectations of students' achievement, Rubovitz and Maehr (1973) concluded that expectations are mediated by teachers' previously held stereotypes. In Rubovitz and Maehr's study, African American and White children of comparable ability were presented to teachers as either gifted or non-gifted. The findings showed the teachers interacted more with the supposedly "gifted" White students than with all other students. In addition, the "gifted" African American students were ignored more than other students, including the non-gifted African Americans.

Lipman (1993) found that teachers' beliefs about and practices with African American students are tenacious and not easily changed despite opportunities for collaboration, dialogue, and closer relations with students. In this study, school restructuring aimed at improving educational experiences of "at-risk" students, mostly African American, failed to produce changes in teachers' beliefs and their marginalizing practices. Lipman reported that in some instances, teacher collaboration reinforced their beliefs in deficit models as explanations for African American school failure.

Foster (1992) studied teacher attitudes and academic achievement of African/Caribbean students in British

schools. He acknowledged that some teachers held negative, stereotyped views and low expectations for African/Caribbean students. However, he failed to support these as causal links to explain the underachievement of these students. Foster contended that this underachievement was due to the "gap in the quality of provision between middle class, predominantly white areas and working class, ethnically mixed areas" (p.278). In other words, African/Caribbean students generally attended poorly resourced and equipped schools where the the general standards of academic achievement were low.

Several studies indicated that teachers' high expectations produced positive results from minority students. Moll (1988) studied successful Hispanic students, and Ladson-Billings (1991) studied teachers who were successful with African American students. Both studies revealed that the teachers' high expectations accounted for the students' successes. That is, the teachers assumed that the students were capable of challenging work. Therefore, they changed and improved the curriculum in order to teach at the highest level possible.

Several studies showed preservice teachers possessed the ability to change their expectations about their students. Larke, Wiseman, and Bradley (1990) found that following a year of interaction with African American and Mexican American students, preservice teachers were more

sensitive in many areas. As an example, preservice teachers demonstrated positive changes in their attitudes and expectations toward minorities. Pre-assessment and post-assessment measures of the preservice teachers' expressed beliefs indicated that their expectations and perceptions of minority students changed from comments of pity and apathy to references to the strengths and capabilities of the students. Similar findings were reported for preservice teachers engaged in tutoring in public housing neighborhoods while concurrently enrolled in an education research course designed to help students confront and examine their beliefs about poor and minority children (Bondy, Schmitz, & Johnson, 1993). In contrast, preservice teachers who tutored but were not enrolled in the education research course showed no change in their beliefs about poor and minority students.

### **Expectation and Gender**

Many researchers agree that gender inequities exist in our schools. These inequities are manifested in the goals of education, in the structure of schools, and in teacher/student interactions (Sadker & Sadker, 1986; Shakeshaft, 1986).

In the early 1980s, Myra Sadker and David Sadker illuminated the inequities of classroom interactions. The Sadkers' first study of classroom interaction was conducted from 1980 to 1984. Data were collected in over 100 fourth,

sixth, and eighth grade classrooms in urban, suburban, and rural settings. Both male and female, and White and minority teachers were observed. The study showed that sex bias existed in all grade levels; that is, males were involved in more teacher interactions than females. More specifically, Sadker and Sadker found that males received more precise feedback; males were more likely to be praised and reprimanded, thus they received more of the teacher's attention; males received more instruction in performing a task and they received more remediation, but teachers often performed the task for female students; and, teachers allowed boys more opportunities to answer questions, engage in activities, give opinions, and assist in the classroom (1986).

Shakeshaft (1986) posited that teachers' limited expectations for females limited their educational and life choices, and that messages of lower expectations held true for majority and minority females. Shakeshaft (1986) also reported that high-achieving female students generally receive the least attention in classroom settings. However, Rubovitz and Maehr's (1973) study indicated that "gifted" Black males received the least amount of teacher attention.

Research in areas such as mathematics and science showed that teachers demonstrated higher expectations for boys (Campbell, 1986). These expectations increased as

males reached the middle school level. Campbell also found that male students were told to try harder, while female students were praised for merely trying. Hwang (1993), who also investigated mathematics classes, found that males were given significantly more wait-time than female students. A positive correlation was indicated between wait-time and teacher expectation.

Bassa, (1994) studied the attitude of sixth grade females toward mathematics. She concluded that healthier and more positive attitudes toward mathematics must be fostered in all students, particularly females and minorities, in order to increase the achievement and representation of these groups in mathematics-related careers.

Linda Grant's (1984) ethnographic study suggested that Black females did not receive the academic encouragement that other segments of the class received. This suggested a bias against race and gender. According to Grant, teachers perceived African American females as socially mature and sought their assistance in nonacademic matters. However, White females were perceived as intellectually competent and teachers sought their help in academic matters.

Scantlebury (1991) studied preservice high school biology teachers during their student teaching practicum. The preservice teachers were able to combat their low

expectations for females in the class and transfer learned equitable teaching into actual teaching practices.

Evans' (1986) study of sex-stereotyping and personal construct theory originated from the view that deeply embedded teacher expectations were not the sole problem in providing equal opportunities for females. That is, the problem extended beyond the mere encouragement of females and the creation of opportunities for them. According to Evans (1986), change for females was closely aligned with how they perceived themselves and their role in the world around them. This study showed that teachers and female students were able to build self-confidence and self-image from increased awareness of attitudes and expectations.

Delcampo (1983) examined gender and family structure issues. Preservice teachers were asked to rate children from divorced homes and children from intact homes on expected school behaviors and expected personality traits. Preservice preschool teachers rated children from divorced families lower than children from intact families on expected personality traits as well as predicted school behaviors. Additionally, boys were rated lower than girls; the boys from divorced families were rated lowest of all groups.

### **Expectations and Exceptionalities**

As inclusion is initiated in more and more school systems, regular classroom teachers must work with students



with various exceptionalities - physical, emotional, or high/low ability. Van Dyke, Stallings, and Colley (1995) stated, "To be successful in an inclusive setting, a general education teacher must believe that students with disabilities can learn successfully and deserve the opportunity to learn in age-appropriate classrooms" (p. 477). However, preservice teachers and in-service teachers report that they have not been appropriately instructed in educating students with special needs. Therefore, our teacher force often holds low expectations for special needs children. As an example, Hawkins, Martin, Blanchard, and Brady (1991) studied teachers' knowledge and beliefs about students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder (AD/HD). The teachers were all in-service teachers enrolled in graduate level education courses. Results indicated that most participants had not been trained to work with students with AD/HD despite the growing prevalence of this population in schools and despite the fact that most of the teachers had worked with AD/HD students in their own classrooms.

Terrill (1993) studied the academic achievement of learning disabled and behavior disordered elementary students. Her findings indicated that achievement was linked most closely with students' locus of control. More internal profiles were associated with higher achievement while students who demonstrated an external profile showed

lower achievement. Terrill's study strengthens the argument held by many educators and researchers that achievement is associated with students' characteristics rather than teacher expectation.

Although sparse, research also shows that some teacher education programs are working to prepare preservice teachers to better meet the needs of special needs students. For example, through Project REACH, Heller, Spooner, Spooner, Algozzine, Harrison, and Enright (1991-1992) provided regular preservice education teachers with a controlled, intensive experience of learning about and working with students with handicaps in regular education classrooms. Research results indicated that preservice teachers' confidence for working with special needs children increased. Specifically, 60% of the preservice teachers changed perceptions about their willingness to work with special needs students.

Van Dyke, Stallings, and Colley (1995) addressed teachers involved in mainstreaming and inclusion classrooms. They cautioned teachers not to lower their expectations for special needs students and that they would be amazed at what these students would be able to achieve.

### **Expectations and Language Diversity**

Language diversity is often coupled with racial and cultural diversity. The majority of students who are labeled limited-English proficient (LEP), or English as

Second Language student (ESL), or non-standard English speaker are members of racial or ethnic groups different from the majority population. Therefore, such students often are doubly rebuffed. Nieto (1992) contends, however, that social class issues probably have a greater effect than language diversity on academic performance.

Language is an important component of children's lives and their culture. When teachers devalue a child's language, the child's culture is also devalued (Larke, 1990; Nieto, 1992). When teachers perceive language diversity as a problem they may interact more negatively with non-English speaking students than with those who speak English (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1987)

Based on the assumption that the immigrant population of Canada would continue to increase, Gougeon (1993) studied Canadian teachers' perceptions of English as Second Language (ESL) students. Teachers were selected for the study because they had large numbers of ESL students in their classes. Research findings showed that teachers possessed both negative and positive attitudes. Some teachers indicated that they were not eager to adapt their teaching styles to accommodate ESL students. Unwillingness to modify instructional designs is usually an indication of cultural insensitivity (Gougeon, 1993). Some teachers showed lower expectations for ESL students by accepting conditions that would not be tolerated for native-Canadian

students. The teachers voiced compassion over ESL students feeling displaced and accepted this as reason for inappropriate behavior.

On the positive side, many teachers interviewed held high expectations and admiration for the majority of the ESL students because of the students' strong work ethic. The teachers felt that most of the ESL students were higher academic achievers than Canadian-born students even though this was not always reflected in their grades (Gougeon, 1993).

### **Expectations and Physical Attractiveness**

The influence of physical attractiveness has a long history in social psychology (Dusek & Joseph, 1985) but has only recently been investigated as a determinant of teacher expectancies. Researchers concluded that teachers' expectancies for academic and social success were higher for more attractive children than for children perceived as less attractive (Dusek & Joseph, 1985).

Dusek and Joseph (1985) examined many studies in which teachers were provided with information about a fictitious child and a picture of the child. The pictures had been previously rated as attractive or unattractive, and included male and female students. The results indicated that the average attractive student was expected to perform better than the less attractive students. La Voie and Adams (1974) contended that physical attractiveness

initially impacted on teacher expectations, but other information became more important as teachers interacted with students.

### **Teacher Characteristics and Expectations**

Many qualities or specific characteristics of teachers are linked with teacher expectations. For example, McNergney and Carrier (1981) stated that teacher variables such as level of competence, coping styles, and defense mechanisms, affected how they formed expectations and how these expectations guided behavior. In addition, Brophy and Good (1974) determined that higher or lower expectations for students affected teacher behaviors such as: (a) amount and quality of praise for correct answers; (b) actual amount of teaching students receive; (c) content covered; (d) number of times students are called on; (f) extent to which the question is challenging; (g) verbal and non-verbal warmth and acceptance of the student in general (eye contact, forward lean, affirmative head nods, smiles, physical contact); (h) teacher assistance and willingness to help; (i) wait time.

Oddly, students are not consistently aware of teacher expectations. Bachofer's (1993) study focused on student perceptions of teacher expectation communication; that is, whether students were receiving the expectation messages that teachers sent out. The findings suggested that students often identified different expectations than those

intended by the teacher. Additionally, students were more aware of positive expectation communication directed toward themselves and negative messages directed toward others.

### **Students' Effect on Teachers**

From its beginning, teacher expectation research and theory have been steeped in controversy. Educators and researchers have always been divided over the purported impact of teacher expectations and teacher actions on students' achievement. Many educators and researchers have hypothesized that there existed a broader more complex range of factors that influenced student performance, broader than that is, than teacher expectation.

Brophy and Good (1970) studied in-service teachers' development and expectations. Seventeen teachers and 204 elementary students were involved in the study. Brophy and Good concluded that teacher expectation effects are primarily students' effects on teachers; that is, teachers react to specific student characteristics. This view suggested that teacher behaviors could be "sustaining" already established student performance rather than changing student beliefs and behavior. This research does not deny that teachers have higher expectations for students who are more academically oriented and lower expectations for students who are not academically motivated.

Cooper and Good (1983) held and explicated similar views. First, expectations probably sustained rather than altered student achievement. The contention is that expectations which depart considerably from a student's actual performance are difficult to maintain. Second, the relationship between teacher expectation and student performance was bidirectional. In other words, teacher behavior influenced student performance and student performance impacted teacher behavior. The relationship was cyclical. Third, not all teachers exhibited expectation effects.

Vogt (1990) studied preservice teachers' attitudes and practices which resulted in differential instruction for high and low-track students. The preservice teachers initially attempted similar tasks with high and low track students. However, due to the perceived unwillingness and inexperience of the low track students in handling tasks that required creative thinking, the preservice teachers utilized more traditional skill based instruction with the low track students. Vogt's study supported findings from Cooper (1983), Brophy and Good (1970), and others.

Paine's research (1990) on teacher expectation revealed that teachers rejected categorical differences of race, gender, and social class. These categories are often associated with teacher expectations. However, differences that were considered important by Paine's group of teachers

included motivation, ability, and attitudes. The teachers reported that they worked with individual student differences and based their expectations on these characteristics.

Goldenberg (1992) contended that it is teacher behavior, not teacher expectation, that produces results; "what a teacher expects matters less than what a teacher does" (p. 522). Goldenberg disengaged beliefs from practices.

### **Teacher Beliefs and Teacher Efficacy**

Teacher belief is broadly defined as "tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and the academic material to be taught" (Kagan, 1992, p.65). Teacher beliefs are held by preservice and inservice teachers and are variously termed "principles of practice, personal epistemologies, personal perspectives, practical knowledge, personality systems, and orientations," to name a few (Pajares, 1992, p. 309). Regardless of terminology, the goal of researchers interested in teacher beliefs is "getting inside teachers' heads to describe their subjective knowledge and beliefs" (Kagan, 1992, p.66).

### **A Brief History of the Study of Beliefs**

Social psychologists' interest in the nature of beliefs and their influence on people's actions began at



the turn of the twentieth century. This interest continued until the emergence of topics such as behaviorism in the 1930s. A resurgence of the study of belief systems was noted in the 1960s and again in the 1980s (Thompson, 1992). This revitalization was juxtaposed with a move from a process-product emphasis on teacher behavior to an emphasis on teacher thinking (Thompson, 1992). Clandinin and Connelly (1987) stated that the new wave of research "purports to study the personal, that is the what, why and wherefore of individual pedagogical action" (p.487).

### **Beliefs and Knowledge**

Researchers have often distinguished between specialized knowledge which particular individuals need in their particular occupations and more personalized knowledge or beliefs. Specialized knowledge is most often derived from research based theories of experts, authorities and scientists. It is what preservice teachers are exposed to and learn in teacher education courses and education textbooks. Beliefs, on the other hand, are constructed from experience (Kleinsasser, 1992). In order to situate my research as more of an examination of preservice teachers' personalized beliefs as opposed to their expertise in specialized knowledge, I consider a few distinctive features of beliefs here.

First, there is variation in the degree of commitment and conviction in a belief. Some beliefs are very strong,

hardy, and highly resistant to change while others are not so well defined (Bandura, 1986; Clark, 1988; Thompson, 1992). Knowledge, however, is not related to degree of conviction. Second, beliefs are not consensual; others may hold different beliefs. According to Thompson (1992), "disputability is associated with beliefs; truth or certainty is associated with knowledge" (p.129). Knowledge must meet certain criteria in order to be classified as such. That which constitutes knowledge may change over time as old theories are replaced by new, more potent theories.

Several fundamental assumptions or generalizations about beliefs relate directly to a study of teachers' educational beliefs. They include:

1. Beliefs are formed early and are resistant to change (Clark, 1988; Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992).
2. The belief system helps individuals define and understand the world and how they relate to it (Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992).
3. The earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief system, the more stable it becomes. Newly acquired beliefs are more vulnerable to change (Clark, 1988; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980).

4. Beliefs are crucial in interpreting, planning, and making decisions (Bandura, 1986; Isenberg, 1990; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992).

5. Beliefs about teaching are established before students reach college courses (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Lortie, 1975; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980).

Understanding the entity of teachers' belief systems helps to explain the variation in teachers' practices.

### **Teacher Efficacy**

Closely aligned with beliefs is the concept of efficacy. Bandura (1986) explained efficacy in terms of self-referent thought, an important facet of each persons' self system. Self-referent thought mediates the relationship between knowledge and action (Bandura, 1986). People's characterizations of themselves rely heavily on prior theories, impressions and judgements (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). How people judge their capabilities will influence their expectations and affect how they relate to events in their lives (Bandura, 1986; Nisbett & Ross, 1980). This premise also holds true in education.

Teacher efficacy is characterized as "the teacher's evaluation of their own ability to bring about positive student change and motivation" (Guyton, Fox, & Sisk, 1991, p. 3); and teacher's competence to teach students regardless of student characteristics including gender,

race, and socioeconomic status (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Hoy and Woolfolk (1990) discussed two dimensions of teacher efficacy, general teaching efficacy and personal teaching efficacy. General teaching efficacy reflected "a general belief about the power of teaching to reach difficult children and has more in common with teachers' conservative or liberal attitudes toward education" (p. 283). Personal teaching efficacy represented the teacher's personal sense of capability to execute particular actions. Miller (1991) suggested that:

A teacher's sense of efficacy influences thoughts and feelings, choice of activities, the amount of effort expended with students, and the extent of persistence in the face of challenging circumstances (p.32).

In other words, teacher efficacy is demonstrated in the degree of involvement and interaction that teachers have with students.

Studies by Ashton and Webb (1986) and Schlosser (1992) examined teachers' degree of efficacy with low achieving students. Both studies concluded that high efficacy teachers saw low achieving students as reachable and teachable. High efficacy teachers felt that good teaching made a difference with students; they assumed the responsibility of teaching them; and they worked to build positive relations with all of their students. Low efficacy teachers viewed low achievers as incapable of learning and therefore spent little time with them. These teachers

believed in distancing themselves from their students and depended on their authority to promote achievement.

Winfield (1986) investigated the relationship between teachers' sense of efficacy and their work with urban students. This study yielded four categories of teacher beliefs and teacher behaviors. Winfield labeled these categories tutors, general contractors, custodians, and referral agents. The tutors were described as teachers who believed that students could learn and they believed that it was their responsibility to help them. The general contractors also believed that student improvement was possible. However, rather than working with difficult students, they sought outside help such as aides and resource teachers. The custodians did not believe that much could be done to help urban students and they did not seek outside help. The referral agents, like the custodians, did not believe that much could be done to help urban students. Nonetheless, they shifted responsibility to personnel such as the school psychologist and special education teachers.

Hoy and Woolfolk (1990) studied preservice teachers during and after the practicum field experience. Results indicated that personal teaching efficacy increased as general teaching efficacy declined. That is, preservice teachers' optimistic beliefs about personal ability to motivate and teach difficult students increased following

the practicum field experience. However, they were less sure that education could overcome the limitations of home and family environment.

Burt (1993) examined preservice teachers' personal teaching efficacy and their behavior toward international students in multicultural small group activity sessions. Results showed that overall, the preservice teachers exhibited more positive than negative behaviors toward both international and U. S students.

Colgan (1994) studied the influence of efficacy training on in-service teachers. The study was designed to help determine if efficacy training for teachers would have a positive influence on student achievement. Overall, the experimental group, whose teachers participated in efficacy training, produced slightly higher standardized scores in reading and mathematics than did the control group.

Teacher efficacy is important because it has been related to teaching practices, classroom climate, support of student initiative, and concern for working with all students (Guyton, Fox & Sisk, 1991). Teacher efficacy is one key to the achievement of academic success for all students (Hoy, & Woolfolk, 1990; Miller, 1991).

### **Preservice Teachers' Perspectives and Prior Beliefs**

According to Breault (1995), the teaching profession is unlike other professions in that "teachers undergo their most intensive training before they enter a teacher

education program" (p.266). Breault's reference is to the tremendous impact of the approximate 13,000 hours the average person has spent in classrooms prior to entering college - time that has helped preservice teachers develop a set of beliefs and practices related to teachers and teaching. These life experiences have helped to form the personal beliefs and perspectives through which future experiences are filtered (Armaline & Hoover, 1989; Breault, 1995; Lortie, 1975; Nias, 1989). This close-up, extended view of what teachers do is what Lortie (1975) called the "apprenticeship of observation."

Zeichner and Liston (1987) emphasized that students entering teacher education programs have definite ideas about teaching and learning. However, their ideas cannot always be articulated. These ideas are loosely formulated philosophies of education that personally explain what teachers do and how children learn in classrooms. Hollingsworth (1986) stated that these preservice teachers' perspectives serve as culturally based filters to help make sense of the program content, their roles as future teachers, their observations of classrooms at work and their translation of program content into teaching/learning activities in classrooms.

Generally, preservice teachers are committed to their beliefs and reluctant to change them (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Pajares, 1993). Even when preservice

teachers appeared to show changes in initial beliefs, McDiarmid (1990) hypothesized that the changes were superficial and short-lived. McDiarmid added:

Teacher education students rarely become aware of the assumptions on which they operate. Instead, they either reconfigure ideas and information they encounter to fit with their initial beliefs or they simply reject or ignore what does not fit. (p.13)

Armaline and Hoover (1989) emphasized the need to "dislodge students from belief systems rooted only in their own unexamined experience of having been in schools' as students..." (p.46).

As our school population becomes more diverse it is especially important that preservice (and in-service) teachers analyze their own fundamental values, attitudes, dispositions, and belief systems (Abt-Perkins & Gomez, 1993; Banks & Banks, 1992; Barrett, 1993; Sleeter & Grant, 1986). They must also analyze how their perspectives might influence their teaching and consequently their students' learning. If such analysis is not done, preservice teachers' expectations of their students will likely reflect their own cultural orientation which might differ from the cultural experiences of their students (Burstein & Cabello, 1989; Haberman, 1991; O'Keefe & Johnston, 1989). Analysis of perspectives and prior beliefs will help preservice teachers arrive at what Burstein and Cabello call the "awareness level" (p.11).



Evans (1986) believed that teachers were often "unconscious of the reasons why they pay attention or respond to students differently" (p.71). However, Evan's study suggested that through various methods of analysis, participants can be helped to "reflect on early socialization and identify deeply embedded expectations" (p.71). Likewise, Smyth (1989) argued for critical reflection for both preservice and inservice teacher education:

Above all we need to regard the views we hold about teaching not as idiosyncratic preferences, but rather as the product of deeply entrenched cultural norms that we may not even be aware of (p.7).

As Zeichner and Liston (1987) have urged, the aim of teacher education programs should be to help preservice teachers become more aware of themselves and their environments in a way that changes their perceptions of what is possible. When prospective teachers expand their perceptions of what is possible their actions will lead to greater benefits for all of their students.

## Conclusion

Teachers perform thousands of actions each day, many so routine that they probably go unnoticed. Teachers rarely check their thoughts or examine the beliefs that underlie their actions. Research discussed in this chapter does not prove that teacher expectations, teacher actions, or teachers' sense of efficacy cause particular student

behaviors, only that a relationship exists. The influences on student performance are multiple and complex. Teachers are by no means the only determinants of students' success and failure. In fact, many believe that teachers have less power than others involved - administrators, lawmakers, and teacher educators. However, it is imperative that classroom teachers understand the importance of the social context in which teaching and learning take place. Grant and Sleeter (1986) stated:

Teachers constitute a core group of those who make schooling what it is. Teachers are the final arbiters of what is taught in classrooms, how it is taught and what actions and interactions can legitimately occur. (p.101)

In this study I explore and describe the beliefs and practices of a new "core group," a pair of preservice teachers. These preservice teachers have been educated in a program designed to prepare teachers for schools of the Twenty-First Century.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This qualitative study focused on the beliefs and practices of two preservice teachers from an elementary education program at a large southern university. The education program was based on principles established by the National Holmes Group. My research questions dictated the use of qualitative methodology. Questions for this study were as follows:

1. What affects preservice teachers' expectations of students in a multicultural elementary school classroom?
2. How do preservice teachers communicate their expectations for students?
3. How do preservice teachers describe inconsistencies in their beliefs and practices?
4. How do students acknowledge preservice teacher's expectations?
5. How does pairing preservice teachers affect their ability to communicate their expectations of students?

This chapter begins with a rationale for the selected methodology and progresses to an explanation for the selection of the research site and participants. Finally,

the data collection and analysis procedures are discussed, and the categories that were discovered are presented.

### **Rationale for the Methodology**

Qualitative research is a field of inquiry that crosses disciplines, fields, and subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). LeCompte and Preissle (1993) use the term "ethnographic research" as a "shorthand rubric for investigations described variously as ethnography, qualitative research, case study research, field research, or anthropological research (p. 2)." Considering the various terms encompassed under the qualitative paradigm, I defined this research as an ethnographic case study.

Qualitative research is an umbrella term referring to several research strategies that share certain characteristics ( Atkinson & Delamont, 1985; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) stated:

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 2)

Qualitative research is typically inductive in nature, that is, "researchers begin with collection of data and build theoretical categories and propositions from relationships discovered among the data" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 42). Theory that develops or emerges in

this manner, from the bottom up rather than from the top down, is called "grounded theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The theoretical assumptions underlying this study are from a phenomenological and experimental ethnographic perspective. In phenomenology, the focus is on "the meanings of events to those involved" (Shipman, 1985, p.11), that is, "the way the individual subjects make sense of their world" (p. 13). Phenomenologists do not assume that they know what events and things mean to those studied (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Fetterman (1988) stated substantially, "Essentially, a phenomenologically oriented researcher argues that what people believe to be true is more important than any objective reality; people act on what they believe" (p.18). "New ethnography" or "experimental ethnography" often identified the fieldworker as an actor in the ethnographic situation (Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, & Cohen, 1989), and allows for the "many voices clamoring for expression" (Clifford & Marcus, 1986, p.7).

My observations and interpretations of classroom life were affected by my own cultural identity. Because of my own personal history as an educator (having been educated and socialized as a teacher) I was not able to detach myself from the context of the research site (a task that I was cautioned should not even be attempted). My observations, interviews, informal conversations, field notes, and analysis of documents have aimed to produce a

collaborative study that combined my interpretations of the preservice teachers' actions, their explanations of these actions, their statements of beliefs, and my personal insights. In this collaborative study I examined a very common-place setting (a classroom) as if it was exceptional and unique.

My intent in this study was to avoid what Pinar (1988) called "a perspectiveless perspective" (p.138). Again, borrowing from Pinar, this study demonstrated my "effort to describe, and through description understand, the everyday life of those in a classroom" (p.138).

### **Setting and Participants**

Qualitative researchers often use criterion-based selection in choosing the group or the site to be studied (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Qualitative researchers may "establish in advance a set of criteria or a list of attributes that the units for study must possess" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 69). With criterion based selection in mind, my research questions dictated the search for:

- a pair of Holmes elementary preservice teachers
- an elementary school.

### **School/Classroom Setting**

My research site and preservice teachers came hand in hand. That is, the study would be conducted wherever the preservice teachers were assigned for their practicum

experience. All Holmes preservice teachers worked in Professional Development Schools (PDS). A PDS is defined as:

Elementary, middle, or high schools that work in partnership with a university to develop and demonstrate fine learning programs for diverse students; practical preparation for teachers; new understandings and professional responsibilities for experienced educators; and research projects that add to all educators' knowledge about how to make schools work better (LSU Holmes Document, P. 2).

The preservice teachers that I selected were assigned to a fourth grade classroom at West End Elementary School. This "naturalistic setting" and the "naturally bounded group" (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p. 62) are described in more detail in the next chapter as a part of data analysis.

### Participants

The primary participants, a pair of Holmes elementary preservice teachers, were in their final year of a five year teacher preparation program at a large southern university. During the fifth year (referred to as the graduate year, the practicum year, or the internship year) the preservice teachers work in pairs. My research pair, Emily and Morgan, was recommended by a university education faculty member who had worked with the Holmes program for the previous two years. The professor felt that this pair could devote time to the study because of their lighter course load; they were not concurrently completing their internship and taking a course. Emily and Morgan had

completed their elective coursework during the Summer semester.

Nine Holmes elementary preservice teachers were in their fifth year of study; this pair was a subset of the larger population. According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993), "subsets clearly delineate the larger population that the selection is assumed to represent or to which it legitimately can be compared (p.59)".

My previous contact with the Holmes preservice teachers had been limited; therefore, I was delighted when the pair responded promptly to a message that I left on their phone - Emily and Morgan were roommates at the time. After briefly discussing my study on the phone and later meeting with them in my office, the two preservice teachers eagerly agreed to participate in my study (See Appendix A). Both preservice teachers were 22 year old Caucasian, middle class, females from small, southern towns. Each participant will be discussed in later chapters.

My study was conducted during the Spring semester, the preservice teachers' second semester at West End. During the second semester (my data collection semester) one of the preservice teachers worked in a middle school for several weeks in order to fulfill middle school certification requirements. I thought that this fortuitous circumstance would be beneficial to my study for it would allow me the opportunity to first observe an individual



preservice teacher working alone with the class, and later, the pair working together. However, because of (1) school-wide testing, (2) full day teaching responsibilities for each preservice teacher, (3) preservice teachers required observation times with other teachers, and (4) teaching time needed by the cooperating teacher and ancillary teachers, I had few opportunities to view collaborative work between the preservice teachers. In other words, there were few times when the two were together. My research centers more on Emily, the preservice teacher who remained in the class for most of the semester. All names (i.e., individuals and places) in the study are identified by pseudonyms.

### Data Collection

As stated earlier, qualitative research is inherently multimethod in focus (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, in order to actively explore my questions, various qualitative methodologies were used in data collection including participant observations, interviews, audio recording, and field notes. These approaches pulled from ethnographic methodologies which are concerned with the "meaning of actions and events from the perspective of those we seek to understand" (Spradley, 1980; p. 5). School records, teachers' lesson plans, reflective journals, and students' work were analyzed as supportive data.

Primary data were collected over a 15 week period between January and May of 1995. Approximately 85 hours were spent in observations in a fourth grade classroom, semi-structured interview sessions outside of the classroom, attendance at a seminar for the elementary preservice teachers, and attendance at the preservice teachers' Master's presentations.

### **Participant Observations**

According to Guba (1978):

Observations are intended primarily to build up a continuous record of ongoing events, to add interpretive comments on manifest and latent features of the situation, and to uncover tacit assumptions, interpersonal relationships, and status differentials. (p. 40)

Participant observers record and analyze their particular environment in an effort to make the "...strange familiar and the familiar strange..." (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 42). As a participant observer, I looked for "large trends, patterns, and styles of behavior" (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 378) related to teacher beliefs and practices. This emphasis on patterns of behavior was intended to help minimize attention to isolated instances of behavior. I observed and interacted with teachers and students in order to establish an insider's identity without being a full participant. Adler and Adler (1994) refer to this as a "peripheral membership role" (p. 380).

Classroom observations were generally conducted during the morning hours between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. This time frame was suggested by the cooperating teacher and the preservice teachers because the preservice teachers did most of their teaching during these hours.

Initially, during the first weeks, I employed Spradley's (1980) grand tour observation model. My observations were broad and descriptive in nature as I sought answers to the general question, "What is going on here? " The grand tour observations provided an overview of the social scene, the teachers, the students, the daily routine, and the physical aspects of the classroom and the school.

As patterns of behavior and beliefs were identified through coding and revisiting my data (discussed in Data Analysis Section), my observations became more focused. Focused observational data were gathered during the last 13 weeks of the study. Focused observations helped guide and limit the research investigation, and provide data on the preservice teachers' beliefs and practices.

Field notes were the primary data source during my observations in the classroom. Field notes are "written accounts of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 107). These handwritten, condensed notes were expanded and

entered into a computer as soon as possible after each observation. My field notes documented the physical environment, actions, interaction and dialogue.

Audio recording of classroom dialogue was attempted in order to enhance my field notes. However, this proved to be unsuccessful. The amount of activity, active involvement of the students, constant movement of the preservice teachers, visitors in the classroom, and other actions made most audio recordings inaudible.

### Interviews

In order to make this a collaborative study, semi-structured interviews were conducted throughout the research period. These interviews were with the preservice teachers, cooperating teacher, and a college professor who worked closely with the preservice teachers. The length of the interviews varied from 30 minutes to over two hours. Scheduled interviews were held in my campus office, at my home, and at various unoccupied sites at the elementary school (e.g., classroom, library, cafeteria, secluded table on the playground).

Interviews were particularly valuable for uncovering perspectives. During the interviews I asked probing questions. Many interview questions pertained to the preservice teachers' life histories and their beliefs about teaching. Additionally, interview questions were intended to clarify observational data generated in the classroom

and hypotheses that I had drawn from various documents (e.g., reflective journals, lesson plans). Some questions encouraged the preservice teachers to reflect on their teacher preparation. Other questions were spontaneous, prompted by comments made by the preservice teachers (See Appendix B for sample of questions). Scheduled interviews were audio taped and transcribed. Conversations that were not audio taped were reconstructed as soon as possible.

The interviews served several purposes. First, semi-structured interviewing allowed "establishment of a human-to-human relationship with the respondents and the desire to understand rather than to explain" (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 366). Second, interviews allowed increased attention to the voices and feelings of the respondents (Fontana & Frey, p. 363). Third, interviews added breadth and understanding to my observations.

## **Materials**

The researcher is the primary research tool in qualitative methodology because information is collected and recorded through his or her lenses or filter (McGee-Brown, 1994). Therefore, I served as the predominant research tool. Other materials used in this research included a tape recorder, a field notebook, and a camera. I also secured and analyzed documents produced by the preservice teachers. These included biographical data sheets, autobiographical essay forms (See Appendix C), self

evaluation reports, reflective journals, lesson plans, worksheets, and test forms.

The biographical data sheets and autobiographical essay forms were documents completed by the preservice teachers in 1992 when they sought admission to the Holmes Elementary Education program. The biographical data sheet was designed to inventory demographic information about the preservice teachers, and the autobiographical essay required the preservice teachers to "focus on their development as a student becoming a teacher" (LSU Document, 1992). Directions accompanying the Autobiographical Form encouraged the preservice teachers to reflect on their reasons for entering the teaching profession, qualities that they considered most important in a teacher, their experiences in working with children, travel experiences, and specific talents/skills (LSU Document, 1992). The self evaluation reports and the reflective journal provided valuable insight into the participants' beliefs and practices. According to McGee-Brown (1994), "documents produced by individuals are often a rich source of information about what is happening and what participants are thinking" (p. 34).

### **Data Analysis**

Beginning with my initial observations and continuing throughout the study, I regularly reviewed and coded my

field notes, interview transcripts, teacher journals, and other documents according to predetermined and emerging categories. Miles and Huberman's (1984), Qualitative Data Analysis guided my coding and analysis. A few codes were specifically designed before research began (i.e., start list). These codes were developed to address my research questions. For example, from the outset I knew that my study was an examination of beliefs/expectations and practices of the preservice teachers. Therefore, codes for these entities were decided in advance. Other codes were developed after collecting and analyzing documents, observational, and interview data.

Collecting, recording, coding, and analyzing of my data were continuous and cyclical. I made multiple copies of all data - keeping one clean copy, coding a second copy, and coding and cutting the third copy. These coded chunks were placed on cards and grouped according to codes. These cards abled me to quickly cluster information that related to particular questions and new concepts. Each group was continually reviewed for evolving categories (I wanted to discover what was really there and not be constrained by my predetermined questions and codes). Each coded segment was "tagged" indicating the location of the original data chunk.

By analyzing the grouping of codes, I was able to define categories that helped to explain the preservice

teachers' beliefs and practices. I considered my data to be especially strong if I located supporting evidence many times and from various data sources (i.e., field notes, interviews, documents).

### **Criteria for Evaluation**

#### **Triangulation**

In my study I worked to achieve methodological triangulation of data and researcher triangulation. "Triangulation [particularly methodological] prevents the investigator from accepting too readily the validity of initial impressions" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 48). Observation field notes, interview transcripts, tape recordings, documents, and school records served as methodological triangulation of data. These multiple data sources provided cross-checking of inferences and findings (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), establishment of consistency across data, and convergence of evidence.

Triangulation involved having two researchers examine sections of my field notes to identify preservice teachers' beliefs and practices. The findings of these coders were similar to my own findings. The researchers were colleagues engaged in qualitative research and teacher education.



## **Ethics**

Bogdan and Biklen (1992), and Spradley (1980) outlined general ethical principles by which the majority of qualitative researchers abide. These principles guided my research as well. Briefly, the principles were:

(1) The participants' identities were protected in order that the information collected would not embarrass or in any way harm them. All names in the study were identified by pseudonyms.

(2) The participants were treated with respect. I was truthful with the participants and sought their cooperation in the research.

(3) In obtaining permission to conduct this research project, I made the terms of agreement clear to those with whom I would work closely - the preservice teachers, the cooperating teacher, and the principal.

(4) I told the truth in reporting my findings.

## **Summary**

This case study examined the beliefs and practices of a pair of elementary preservice teachers assigned to a fourth grade classroom. The theoretical assumptions underlying this study are from a phenomenological and experimental ethnographic perspective which allows for the "many voices clamoring for expression" (Clifford & Marcus, 1986, p.7). During this study, I collected and analyzed data that pertained to descriptions of the preservice

teachers' beliefs and practices, their interpretations of  
their beliefs and practices, and my personal insights.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore, describe, and interpret the beliefs and practices of two preservice teachers. These preservice teachers were enrolled at a large southern university. They were completing their final year, the graduate year, of an elementary education program based on the principles of the National Holmes Group. The Holmes program was designed to prepare teachers for schools of the twenty-first century - teachers who would be comfortable teaching all children. The Holmes Elementary Education Program is built around the view of the teacher as a reflective practitioner. A reflective teacher is "grounded in content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge....and recursively draws from experience to enhance this multifaceted knowledge base" (LSU Holmes Document, 1994, p. 21).

Through observations, interviews, informal conversations, field notes, and analysis of documents, this study combined my interpretations of the preservice teachers' actions, their explanations of their actions, their statements of beliefs, and my personal insights. This study was conducted in a multicultural fourth grade classroom in a professional development school. The following questions dictated the focus of this research.

1. What affects preservice teachers' expectations of students in a multicultural elementary school classroom?
2. How do preservice teachers communicate their expectations for students?
3. How do preservice teachers describe inconsistencies in their beliefs and practices?
4. How do students acknowledge preservice teachers' expectations?
5. How does pairing preservice teachers affect their ability to communicate their expectations of students?

In this chapter I discuss the results of data analysis. Within this discussion on analysis of data are descriptions of (1) the school, (2) the fourth grade classroom, (3) various students in the fourth grade classroom, and (4) other relevant participants in the school. This pivotal background information introduces the multicultural aspect of my study and serves as the frame in which the preservice teachers' beliefs and practices will be displayed. Primary emphasis is given to an analysis of data on the subjects of the case studies, Emily and Morgan, and to the categories that were discovered with regard to beliefs and practices.

### A "Real School"

Emily and Morgan were assigned to West End Elementary School for their graduate year field experience. This field placement assignment determined my research site, my "real school." Meade (1991) described a real school as:

a school that serves, insofar as possible, a student population that reflects general demographic trends in terms of race, ethnicity, social class and ranges and kinds of learners (remedial to gifted or physically, emotionally, or mentally handicapped). (p. 667)

In many respects West End Elementary is a real school, a school that has the capabilities of providing experiences with diverse populations. Yet, as I describe West End Elementary, I must admit that it is unique in ways that warrant mention.

West End Elementary has a reputation of being one of the more progressive and innovative schools in the city. Visitors come to West End from across the nation, as well as from other countries, to see the extraordinary education that is taking place. The administrator and teachers estimate that approximately 500 persons visit the school each year. This in itself is an anomaly because schools are reputed to not welcome visitors. Additionally, West End is exceptional because of its principal, Mrs. Chism. Mrs. Chism is known in her school and throughout the city as a trenchant administrator who pursues true teacher empowerment. Several times during the semester Emily and Morgan alluded to the effectiveness of the principal.

After my participants, Emily and Morgan, agreed to participate in my study, I quickly made an appointment with Mrs. Chism. My next step was to secure permission to conduct my study in West End Elementary School. As stated earlier, the field placement of my preservice teachers determined my research site.

### **West End Elementary School**

The office at West End was crowded with people including office workers, teachers, parents, and students. I was immediately struck by the professional air of everyone (a thought I had many times over the semester). As I waited to sign in, I tuned in to the various verbal interchanges. The dialogues pertained to school business rather than personal conversations that visitors often become privy to in school offices. As I sat in one of the chairs waiting to see Mrs. Chism, I thought, "this is a place where serious business transpires."

A short time later, as I sat in Mrs. Chism's office, I listened as she apologized for keeping me waiting. She explained that she and a group of her teachers were in the process of interviewing persons for two teaching positions at West End. Mrs. Chism stated that at West End, a committee of teachers is always involved in interviewing and hiring new instructional personnel. All new personnel must espouse a philosophy that is in accord with that of

the school and they must be able to work as a team with the teachers and workers already present.

With Mrs. Chism's apologies and explanations aside, I explained my study and provided her with an abbreviated prospectus. She was particularly interested in the focus of my study, teacher beliefs and practices. According to Mrs. Chism, West End Elementary had recently participated in a national study that looked at schoolwide beliefs and practices. She proudly stated:

We were one of very few schools, in fact, we were probably the only one, but I am not going to be that conceited, that ...we were really practicing our beliefs. In the areas that we partially believed in we partially practiced it. But you would be surprised how many people in that room, all of them almost, had these real strong beliefs...because all of this was really appropriate for children and for learning...but very few of them practiced it.

Additionally, West End Elementary participated in a three year study conducted by the Center on Organizational Restructuring of Schools. In each of the three years, the Center on Organizational Restructuring chose nine schools that were examples of successful restructuring efforts. West End Elementary was one of these schools. It was obvious that Mrs. Chism was delighted with this and the multitude of other recognitions that the school had received.

Mrs. Chism readily granted me access to the school but insisted that I meet with Mrs. Kent to explain my study. Mrs. Kent was Emily and Morgan's mentor or cooperating

teacher. I met with Mrs. Kent, shared my abbreviated prospectus and answered a few questions. Emily and Morgan had already talked to her about my study and she was quite willing to have me spend a semester in her classroom. I assured Mrs. Kent that I did not want to alter her usual routine.

The professional aura of the office was described briefly. The climate of the school was much the same. Plaques and teacher-made signs lined the walls that led to the teachers' lounge. These items emphasized "high expectations" and served as a constant reminder that the students were the most important entity at West End. Wall plaques and signs bore messages such as:

We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. It overcomes discouragement and gets things done. It is the magic quality, and the remarkable thing is....It's contagious!

The halls leading to the classrooms were filled with samples of the students' work. In addition, the walls were lined with framed newspaper and magazine articles describing the innovative activities at West End.



### **School Profile**

West End Elementary is a one story structure. The grounds occupy several acres of land. West End is located in a predominantly white, middle class section of the city and was once considered strictly a neighborhood school. However, as part of a 1981 court ordered desegregation mandate, the school is now paired with an inner city, predominantly African American school approximately eight miles away. West End now has a diverse student population representative of all socio-economic classes and backgrounds found in the city.

The school population at West End is divided into regular education and self-contained gifted education classes. The total student population is 651. Of this number, 462 students are in regular education - 263 White (or, other) and 199 African American; 189 students are in gifted education - 176 White (or, other) and 13 African American. The low number of African American students in the gifted program at West End is representative of the disproportionate number of African Americans in the gifted program throughout the city. The total number of certificated employees at West End is 43. Twelve are African American.

### **The Class**

There were 30 students from diverse populations in Emily and Morgan's class, 17 boys and 13 girls. Of this

number, there were 14 Whites, 13 African Americans, and three from other countries (Africa, Kuwait, and Vietnam). Ronke, who is from Africa, has been tested and labeled gifted but chose to remain in Mrs. Kent's class. James, a small boy from Vietnam, is a Jehovah's Witness and is therefore restricted from participating in activities that relate to holidays, patriotic events and celebrations such as birthdays. When the class made Valentines in February, received St. Patrick stickers in March, and mailed computer produced holiday cards to their computer pals in Houston in April, James worked on other activities. Ahmad, who is from Kuwait, had difficulty with some of the English language, especially idioms, figurative speech, and words with multiple meanings. For example, during a discussion about law suits, Ahmad asked if this was a special suit that lawyers wore.

Five students in the class, John, Sam, Jason, Jenny, and Liz, were classified as slow learners and received academic reinforcement from pull-out programs such as Chapter One and speech therapy. These students were poor readers with some two grade levels below the average for their class. Their reading deficiency often transferred to poor performance in other subjects, logically those subjects that required extensive reading.

The class did not include any physically handicapped students. None of the students were in wheelchairs or

special braces. However, according to the teachers, one boy, Eric, had sustained a stroke as a young child. This caused his speech to be slurred and his motor development to be delayed. In addition, the teachers said that his mental processing of abstract information was slow. Eric is served by an occupational therapist who comes to West End several times a week. Lastly, Rick had been identified as ADD (attention deficit disorder) and took medication twice a day, before coming to school and after lunch.

Whenever possible, the teachers capitalized on the diversity in the classroom. On several occasions I listened as Mrs. Kent, Emily, and Morgan decided which students would work together on various projects. They were intent on providing a setting in which students of different abilities, strengths, and backgrounds worked together. They made sure that this happened through their planning.

### **The Classroom**

During my first week in the classroom I was impressed with the usual, expected details, the unique, atypical factors, and the customary details that were absent. The room appeared small because of an abundance of usual and atypical things. My knowledge of "a typical" classroom was based on my many experiences in schools (detailed in Chapter One). I describe the usual first.

The teacher's desk was in a prominent place very close to the door. Everyone passed it to enter or exit the classroom. The majority of the classroom was occupied by 30 student desks and chairs arranged in groups of twos and fours. The seating arrangement was mixed. Students were not segregated by gender, race, or academic ability. Most groups of four included high and low ability students and African American and White students. The arrangement increased the opportunity for cooperative work, both academic and social. This grouping was another way that the teachers ensured that interactions were not left to chance encounters.

Long rectangular tables, book shelves, storage cabinets, a chalk board, a bulletin board, and a sink marked the periphery of the room. Other "usual things" included posters, a cursive letter chart, a projector screen, a large clock, a globe, maps, trade books, and reference books (encyclopedia, dictionaries).

Computers and printers headed the category of the atypical. There were five computers and three printers in the classroom, and the students used them frequently. This number was the norm for classrooms at West End, but atypical of most classrooms in public elementary schools in Louisiana. This classroom also had a television and a vcr that were mounted high on a wall. I never saw these in use but they were available when needed.

Charts are common in classrooms, but the charts in Emily and Morgan's classroom sent a different, positive message. For example, the charts that were placed above the chalkboard had statements such as: "Winning, Your Reward for Hard Work & Positive Attitude!" and "Knowledge is Power!" Several charts indicated that cooperative group work was encouraged. One chart listed the rules for cooperative groups, while another listed group jobs (leader, checker, recorder/reporter, supply person). A few charts were related to computer usage - computer rules, care, and courtesy.

The emphasis on cooperative work leads to the third category of items that were conspicuous because of their absence. This classroom was void of the items that usually signaled "competition" such as charts and boards for the "Best Spellers," "Perfect Work," and "Star Students." Such headings indicate that only the work of certain students could be displayed. Unfortunately, I was guilty of this practice during some of my teaching.

### **Influences Of the Past**

In this section I focus on the beliefs and practices of Emily and Morgan, preservice teachers at West End Elementary School. I trace their beliefs and practices from various experiences in their families and communities, from their early schooling (i.e. elementary through high school years), from their professional development in

college, and from their preservice experiences at West End Elementary.

Primary data were collected over a 15 week period and included approximately 85 hours of classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and attendance at related events (i.e. Master's presentations, seminar). Because of circumstances beyond my control (explained in Chapter 3), the observation hours were not evenly distributed between the preservice teachers. Rather, approximately 65 hours of data collection were devoted to Emily and 15 hours to Morgan. Consequently, this split produced more profuse data related to Emily. In addition, the preservice teachers' journal writings differed greatly in the degree of reflection and analysis. Emily's writings tended to be more analytical and critical and Morgan's recordings were generally more descriptive. The degree of data analysis related to each preservice teacher is reflective of both the time element and journal entries.

### **Family**

Emily and Morgan had similar backgrounds in that they grew up in small towns, were from close-knit, middle class families, participated in a variety of activities in and out of school, and had one sibling. Despite these resemblances, their experiences were quite different. Emily, grew up in Randolph, a small fishing town located in the southwestern part of the state. Emily described

Randolph as "kinda like country-country, fishermen people." Morgan grew up in Staunton, a suburb of Newport (a large city in the southeastern part of the state). Morgan's family moved from Newport to Staunton when she was in first grade.

Emily's parents were both educators. Her father, a retired teacher and principal, now works in what Emily calls a "mental institution for children." Emily's mother is a Chapter One teacher in an elementary school. Emily frequently wrote and spoke about her parents' impact on her life. In an autobiographical essay, Emily noted:

Having grown up in a family of educators with my mother a teacher and father a teacher and elementary school principal, the political, personal, and professional issues surrounding education and educators have always influenced our way of life. Whether my parents were campaigning for higher teacher salaries, discussing school board policy, or spending summers preparing classrooms and schools, the topic of conversation rarely wandered far from "the system."

An entry in Emily's journal reiterated the importance of education. She wrote, "My outlook on life, values, and goals have been shaped from an environment where education is a top priority."

Morgan's father is a regional manager for a national food production company. Her mother recently began working in order to assist with the college expenses of Morgan and her sister. Her mother is a cafeteria manager at a local elementary school. During an interview, Morgan stated:

She was always there, my mother was always there for me when I was growing up. We were the kind of family

who had a sit down breakfast every morning, sit down dinner. As soon as I came home, "Tell me about your day." And my father, as well, was very involved in my life.

### Schooling

Emily and Morgan received their primary and secondary education in parochial and public schools. Emily was enrolled in public school from kindergarten through third grade. However, from the fourth through the eighth grades, she attended a Catholic school. At the start of ninth grade, Emily's parents transferred her and her brother to the public high school where her father was the assistant principal. Emily reflected, "Coming from a small town, I commuted to this large high school which is a good distance from home."

From first through eighth grades, Morgan attended school with the same group of friends. In ninth grade she was devastated when, because of school district lines, she was not permitted to attend school with her friends. Morgan explained, " I asked my parents to take me to a psychologist so I could prove to them that I needed to be with all my friends."

The school to which Morgan had been assigned had a poor academic reputation; therefore, her parents sent her to a Catholic school for one year. After a year in the Catholic school, Morgan lived with her grandmother for a



year. "[I] actually changed my permanent address just to go to high school where I wanted to go," Morgan stated.

Both Emily and Morgan were outstanding students. Emily described herself as "a hard worker and compulsive about school." When asked to share her memories of school she said that school was "tense," "high pressure" but quickly added that it was pressure that she placed upon herself. Emily stated:

School has always been impulsive, I guess you might say has always been like a coping type thing with me. School has always meant a whole lot more to me than school. From a very early age, about fourth grade, I started to put a lot of pressure on myself to achieve. I have like average intelligence as far as scores and stuff, but my achievement is like exemplary because of what I do. An A was much more to me than it was to other people, it was self-esteem, it was a motivator.

Because her parents were educators, I wondered if Emily received added pressure from them to succeed. As I talked with Emily, I referred to a recent article that I had read about academic achievement and its relationship to family responsibility in the Asian culture. Emily responded quickly, "No, no, not that I remember." But stopping to think for a moment she added:

There might have been some of that because I was like, the kinda like, the favorite hero child of the family. There was some of that, me fitting into a role. But even my family at a certain point would be like "Come on Emily, go to sleep. There is no need for you to study for that science test, that's long enough." There was a point where they would kind of support me but then they would kinda go, "Now you shouldn't do this."

Often, even Emily's teachers would urge her, "Don't worry about it, Emily." As Emily reflected on her school days and compared them to her present experiences as a preservice teacher at West End she stated, "I took it much too seriously. It meant much too much."

Emily's hard work paid off - she was salutatorian of her high school graduating class. Her cumulative grade point average (GPA) was 4.02. Emily found similar academic success in college. Yet, on standardized tests she continued to score in the average range (e.g., 61<sup>st</sup> percentile on the National Teacher Examination). When Emily applied to the Holmes Elementary Program, she referred to her work ethic and standardized test scores. She wrote:

My cumulative of a 3.69 should not fool anybody into thinking high grades come easily to me. Throughout my entire school career, my achievement has always been considerably higher than that which is predicted on standardized tests. These average standardized test scores have driven me to be an above average student.

Morgan was also an outstanding student, especially in the early years - elementary school. "I was, of course, an overachiever in school," reported Morgan. Continuing, she stated:

In second grade we started changing classes. We had seven different classes and we were grouped according to ability. We had the brown birds and the blue birds and of course I was always in the highest group and I was always teacher's pet and got the Student of the Year Award until about fourth grade and I just kinda got interested in other things. Elementary school was basically...really grade oriented, achievement. When I went to middle school it was really more social, I

believe. In middle school I became interested in boys and hanging out with teachers, thinking we were cool. Middle school, of course, was when we started going in cliques [giggle].

### **Influential Teachers**

Ruddell (1995) spoke of "influential teachers" in his article on literacy and excellence in teaching. He defined "influential teachers" as:

those special teachers whom we recall in a vivid and positive way from our academic experience - kindergarten through college years - and who have had a major influence on our academic or personal lives (p. 454).

According to Ruddell, people generally remember a great deal about their "influential teachers" including the grade level, the subject, and personal attributes.

When Emily was asked to remember teachers who were special or influential in her early schooling she immediately commented, "I liked a lot of my teachers in high school. I guess before that they really didn't make much difference to me." Emily's favorite high school teacher was a biology teacher who was "just real, ...very personable." Emily admired this teacher because she was able to inspire all of the students. This teacher was able to reach the students who were not always successful in other classes. Emily stated:

It kinda made me want to be a biology teacher but I realized that I really didn't like the subject matter so much as I liked her, the way she taught it. She made it interesting for me.

Even though Emily held this teacher in high esteem, she was not able to pinpoint the teachers' specific instructional techniques. She stated:

I couldn't tell you what she did to motivate us and to make us all want to do just really good, but everybody in there made A's and B's because we were all so [motivated]... I know she motivated us because we weren't all - I was but my classmates weren't - always that motivated in other classes. But you felt a large ownership over what you did.

"What about elementary," I asked, "was there a special elementary teacher?" After a long pause Emily responded:

"Uh, I'd really have to pull to say I did. The first time I really liked - I always liked my teachers - but I really could say what was a great teacher was like a junior high English teacher and then like that high school teacher.

Morgan had vivid memories of most of her teachers; she considered them "great teachers" and "positive role models." She remembered her "main concern was what the teacher thought about me." In elementary school, Morgan was "very quiet in class, I was there to learn." Morgan reminisced about her elementary teachers. She stated, "During elementary school, I really looked up to my teachers, and I felt that they were the greatest things on the whole planet."

Morgan particularly remembered her first and her fourth grade teachers.

My first grade teacher, Mrs. Shore, really affected my life in a great way. When I entered the first grade I had a lisp and I also slurred my words badly. Mrs. Shore was the person who helped me overcome my speech problem.

Morgan's fourth grade teacher was a male teacher. "He was the first male teacher I had." Morgan remembered him for numerous reasons. She explained:

We did a lot of hands on activities. It was the first time I had ever seen a frog dissected. I mean, we just did so many things, I was like, wow! And I was just really impressed because it was a man. We went to Washington, DC, and things like that.

In varied ways, teachers continued to be important to Morgan in junior high and in high school.

During junior high and high school my teachers were not just educators, they were also friends. They challenged me to apply myself in ways that I never had before by increasing my level of thinking. These influential teachers have strongly motivated me to become a teacher as well.

In addition to her first grade teacher, Morgan considered her eleventh grade English teacher "one of my favorite teachers." Morgan described this teacher as "laid back and so cool." She elaborated:

She was one of those free love sixties ladies who burned [her] bras and she just thought that everybody should have a tulip day, a tulip tree day. She said that "there are some days you just have to take for yourself and enjoy. Step away from life's pressures."

#### **"When Did You Know That You Wanted to be a Teacher?"**

Emily: Always.

Researcher: Yeah?

Emily: Always!

When I posed the question, Emily stated emphatically, "always!" Like most teachers, Emily has known that she wanted to be a teacher since she was a young girl. In

fact, she does not recall wanting to be anything other than a teacher. She said, "It is all that I have strived for since grade school." Emily elaborated:

My first favorite Christmas gift, that gift you love so much, was a chalkboard. It was a chalkboard and on the opposite side was a magnet thing, the letters. And, I taught. My mom said if there was no one to teach I would just teach my dolls. I would teach and point. I wanted to be like my teachers and point and write on the board and all that. I always wanted to do that.

Morgan, on the other hand, had "played teacher" since she was eight years old; however, she was a high school student when she decided to become a teacher. Before high school, Morgan had always wanted to be a dentist.

Regarding her "playing teacher," she stated:

Since I was about eight years old all, of my neighborhood friends played in my garage because ... it was transformed kinda into a playroom. So I had my chalkboard and my grandfather was the accountant for the Newport School Board and he got all kinds of stuff from the school board. And of course I had all of the materials and colored chalks so I just passed them all out and I was teacher.

Morgan's decision not to pursue dentistry was influenced by the fact that dental school required a large commitment of time and she realized, "I don't want to go to school that long."

### **"Teaching Somebody How to do Something"**

As youth, Emily and Morgan were engaged in various activities and jobs. Through these activities they discovered that they had a knack for teaching others. These activities did not relate specifically to school

learning but did help Emily and Morgan recognize their special talent.

Emily's jobs have been numerous. Some required clerical skills but others involved working with or instructing children (i.e., babysitter, swimming instructor, and lifeguard). Writing about her experiences, Emily stated, "This mixture of experiences have helped to enlighten me while also helping me to be confident with my career decisions."

In one of her journals, Morgan noted her early experiences. She wrote,

Teaching has never been a problem for me. Of course I am not talking about school teaching unless you want to count the endless amount of hours as a child playing school in my garage, but teaching in general.

Morgan's activities and jobs were usually related to her athletic abilities. When Morgan was nine years old she taught the neighborhood kids how to play soccer. She explained:

I had an early start teaching others what I knew. When I was about nine years old I used to teach the kids in my neighborhood how to play soccer in my backyard....My little sister's friends would always come over. I taught them how to play soccer, I was always teaching somebody how to do something.

In later years, Morgan used her talent and interests to coach her sister's soccer team and to also work as an instructor at a cheerleader/dance camp. About these experiences she wrote, "I absolutely love helping others improve in areas that I enjoy and am knowledgeable of."

## Early Experiences With Diversity

While growing up, Emily and Morgan had different opportunities to interact with diverse populations. According to Emily, "I live in a large Black community, you know. It is a growing Black community and sort of a stagnant White community." Emily grew up in Randolph which is primarily populated with African Americans, Whites, Vietnamese, and Native Americans. These populations were also represented in the public schools. Emily remembered her early years in public school. She stated, "K through 3 it probably wasn't as integrated when I first started. It was kinda White around when I first started."

From fourth through eighth grades, Emily attended a Catholic school. This school was "all White and maybe one Black kid - his parents were like doctors." Emily's high school, however, was more diverse - approximately 70% Black, 20% White, and 10% other. She noted:

It was such a huge school, you could just be anybody. Nobody cared what you wore, nobody noticed what was the "in club." You didn't know the "in club" because there were so many of them and so many "in people". That was really good for my self-esteem, I got to do what I wanted to do. I did stuff like plays and I was in every single club that existed. It was a very multicultural school.

Emily reflected on this diversity:

Now, looking back at the high school that I went to, it was a rough high school. But I never felt that uncomfortable. I never noticed that my classes were [mostly African American]...I guess when you are just in it you don't notice it. I guess if I just walked into the same type of diverse population that I was in I might notice it now, being away.



Not only was Emily comfortable with diversity, she wanted to contribute to the education of the "underprivileged."

In an early reflective report, she wrote:

Growing up in a rural town with many underprivileged minorities in the school system, I have always felt most comfortable in a classroom with the underprivileged or minority student. These students are also our future and must be given an equal, if not more enthusiastic, learning environment. To educate these children means to awaken their senses to a world of opportunity on the other side of the tracks. Without this awakening, there is despair, and those as teachers and members of society have failed.

Growing up in Staunton, Morgan's exposure to diverse populations was more limited. Staunton's population is 89% White, and 11 % African American and other. Morgan's schools, elementary through high school, were integrated but few minority students were enrolled. Morgan stated:

The schools that I attended, elementary through middle school, were probably about 95% White and 5% African American. When I got to high school it probably changed to 90% and 10%.

Morgan had no close exposure to diversity, only indirect contact through her parents and grandparents. According to Morgan, her "parents had a diverse group of friends," and her grandparents lived nearby in Newport, a large city with much cultural and ethnic diversity. Morgan explained:

I spent summers with them and my grandfather grew up in the Quarter so that's where we would always go on the weekends - walking around the Quarter. He would see people that he still knew from way back when. So I just had exposure to it, but it is not that I grew up in it. I was just exposed to it.

These experiences with her parents and grandparents helped Morgan to be aware of differences. "Real exposure" to other racial and cultural groups occurred, however, when Morgan entered college.

Not until college have I really had any real exposure to diverse populations. College really opened me up to a lot. Not only among African Americans, but Whites. I worked with a lot of Asian, Iranians, and Indians. So, I wouldn't say that I'm sheltered at all, by any means.

For Morgan, college was an awakening, not only to the diversity between racial and cultural groups but also to the differences within groups. For example, Morgan was struck by differences between the African American students in her high school and those that she encountered in college.

The African Americans that I went to school with were more like me than different from me. And when I got to college it was just an eye-opener to see the diverse behaviors among, ... of course, you can't stereotype anything.

In college, Morgan's recognition of diversity was not limited to African American students. She stated, "It [college] just cleared the point to me that there are different Caucasians, Asians, African Americans anywhere."

### **Beliefs Related to Self and Teaching**

In the previous section I provided a glimpse into Emily and Morgan's early biography. This was important, for undoubtedly their early experiences contributed to their beliefs and their individuality. This section

describes Emily and Morgan's self perceptions and their perceptions of their role as teachers. Lortie (1975) believed that an examination of personal predispositions was relevant to becoming a teacher.

Emily and Morgan used similar terminology to describe teachers' responsibilities. In individual conversations, they used words such as "motivate" and "inspire" to describe how they perceived themselves as teachers. Their statements provided insight into the type of teachers that they desired to become. Emily felt that as a teacher:

I just like to motivate the kids. As far as just something I do in every single thing I do, I like to inspire. I like to grasp the attention of (students)...you know it is almost like sometimes I feel like I'm performing, but I would do anything to have them motivated, you know. I feel good to be there.

Similarly, Morgan wrote about the importance of teachers motivating students:

I feel that instilling a motivation to learn is the key factor for positive results of education. If students do not see enthusiasm from their teacher, then you cannot possibly expect them to become motivated to learn. I believe that when a student is motivated, then, there is greater success (which leads to good feelings toward school and high self-esteem). Positive thinking on the teacher's part benefits everyone in the long run.

In a 1992 autobiographical essay, Morgan wrote:

What a student gets out of school is strongly influenced by the teacher and the expectations the teacher has of a student....I reflected upon both my past and future and became determined upon the endeavor to inculcate an enthusiasm for learning in youth just as I experienced in my school days.

On separate occasions, I asked Emily and Morgan to briefly state their philosophy of teaching. Both preservice teachers' statements were more reflective of overall goals that they wanted to meet rather than guiding philosophies. I sat quietly behind my desk as Emily paused and stared thoughtfully into space. This alone was significant because Emily usually responded quickly and without any hesitation. I was impressed by these few moments of silence and reflection; this indicated to me that her philosophy was evolving. Emily did not have a stagnant statement that was quickly rattled off as if from memory.

As I waited for Emily's response, I reflected on how I had answered this question in the past. I knew that I had been guilty of espousing my philosophy without a moment of hesitation. I believe, however, that this was due to my experience, passion, and dedication to my beliefs and not merely a well rehearsed speech that rolls easily from the tongue. Emily possessed passion and dedication but not experience.

Emily was pensive, not really at a lost for words. I was impressed. After a long pause, she answered:

You know, I've answered that 50 million different ways. I can say all the right things which I don't know if I always do all the right things. I really believe in incorporation and making things meaningful for kids and all that. And my philosophy is, it goes all along with the integrated stuff and the making things meaningful and bringing in the multicultural and all that. I agree with all those things and I try

to use them as best I can. Most of all I like to motivate.

Several weeks later, Morgan responded to my question on her philosophy of teaching. She stated:

Meeting the students' needs, accommodations for students who not only academically need extra support but as well as emotional, because I have encountered a lot of students who I need to look further than what's on the paper. And, just teaching in a way that is meaningful for the children.

Morgan's journal further revealed her beliefs about school and teaching. She wrote:

In order for a student to achieve he must enjoy school as a "place" as well as a learning facility. I believe that school is a wonderful place. It is one of the only things that everyone in the country has in common because everyone is required to attend school for a certain amount of time. In order to assure that learning takes place, a school must have a comfortable, secure, and confident atmosphere.

### Identifying Significant Strengths

Being individuals, Emily and Morgan differed in what they perceived as their strengths. Emily saw herself as responsible.

I have always been a very responsible person. That's a part of me that fits right in with teaching. I tend to want to manage everybody, you know. So it's very good for teaching, not so great with everything else, you know.

Emily considered being organized as another of her forte.

She wrote in her reflective journal:

I think my strengths as a teacher lie in organization. I gave our lessons much thought when planning them, and my instincts were usually on target.

Additionally, Emily recognized the affective qualities of teaching, qualities that she had admired in one of her own teachers (i.e., her favorite high school teacher), in Mrs. Kent, and in herself. She stated:

I just like teachers who communicate with their students on a level more than I'm the teacher and you're the student. I guess that's what I like about Mrs. Kent. To me, that's what I like about me.

Near the end of the semester, Emily was confident in her ability to teach. In her journal, she wrote, "We are degreed teachers with a lot to offer," and "...we have a million good ideas..." Other journal entries repeated this feeling of confidence. For example, Emily stated, "...can't wait to teach it," "I simply got up their and taught them what I knew...", "We made these spur of the moment plans and our teaching went fine," "I feel confident in the area of classroom discipline," and "I like feedback from people."

Morgan wrote about several areas in which she felt very strong. Her journal stated, "Since I consider myself somewhat organized, I feel that I will be able to handle all responsibilities of teaching." Additionally, she wrote that she was patient and had a good sense of humor. In a final evaluation she reflected:

I spent a large amount of time trying to determine if I had any other strengths in addition to my patience and sense of humor I listed in my midterm self evaluation, and I had a real difficult time trying to find any new overall strengths.

In a journal entry, Morgan wrote:

I feel that some people are blessed with the skills to do certain things, and I know that I have both the patience and perseverance to give what it takes to become a successful teacher.

Emily and Morgan continually addressed their professional and personal growth through discussions (e.g., talks with Mrs. Kent, peers, and university professors) and reflective journal writings. Their journals contained statements such as:

I became very comfortable with my environment as well as my ability to effectively communicate as a teacher (Morgan).

I have had an enlightening week and am growing as a teacher and person (Emily).

Throughout this time in the classroom, I have noticed areas of growth, areas of strength, and areas needing improvement in my teaching (Emily).

Although neophytes, Emily and Morgan were becoming adept at teaching at a moments notice. This was a definite strength. On several occasions Mrs. Kent assigned a lesson to Emily or Morgan a few minutes before they had to teach it. When this happened, Mrs. Kent would walk over to me and whisper that she had just assigned a lesson to one or the other and that they had not had much preparation time. I always felt that Mrs. Kent was stretching out the safety net in the event that they performed poorly. Of course, some of these spur of the moment lessons were better than others but none were poor lessons.

### Identifying Significant Weaknesses

Morgan's strength (i.e., patience) was Emily's professed weakness. Emily acknowledged the need for "patience" when she wrote, "one needs to have a lot of patience to provide this care all day long." Despite this recognition, Emily considered "patience" her primary weakness. She relayed this message in a self evaluation, her reflective journal, and in our interviews. For example, in 1993 she wrote in a self evaluation report:

My weaknesses as a teacher lie in patience. I noticed that I was much more concerned with noise level, seating positions, and general on task behavior. I will have to learn what teaching style is most effective for me without limiting the creativeness or enthusiasm of the students.

During an interview, as we talked about her teaching, Emily commented, "It takes patience and I pray for that always, by the way." Emily felt that she was impetuous and easily aggravated, particularly with students who were both inattentive and experiencing difficulty with a task. During one of our interviews she related, "I don't have a lot of sympathy for folks who don't focus when they don't understand." Emily also talked about her impatience with students who misbehave. She stated:

It is hard for me to be real nice to a student who is really messing up my lesson, and you know, I should be able to rise above that. That's a weakness of mine. I should be able to say this is a child and I'm a teacher.

As Emily continued to describe herself she used the term "mean streak". She explained:



I know there are days I can go in there, and I have a mean streak in me, I have a little bit of a tendency to sometimes be a little too sharp. I can feel very superior to them at times.

On another occasion, Emily stated:

There were times when I didn't know if I could have the patience to deal with some of those kids. Some of the days I was in there I thought, "I just really don't feel like it today." But it never last, it never even last the whole day.

Severe migraine headaches affected Emily's performance during the semester. These were particularly troublesome when the school year started and again in April. Emily explained:

I know I have had a real rough time as far as just me. Some days I have brought a lot of that in and just thought I had a lot to think about in that classroom.

These headaches were almost alleviated after a doctor prescribed medication. Emily's headaches were likely related to the rigor of teaching. Emily wrote, "Getting these students to stay focused throughout a 45 minute lesson can get exhausting."

Although Morgan was successful in her teaching, she was not always as confident as Emily. Here again, one preservice teacher's strength was the other's weakness. Morgan admitted her feelings of insecurity as she wrote about her early teaching experiences with the fourth graders.

I constantly thought about every minute thing that I did with the students. I actually think that I analyzed my actions to the point that my natural abilities were somewhat inhibited.

Morgan's journal writings showed that she had similar feelings while teaching the middle school students (Morgan spent most of the semester in a middle school science class).

I am so nervous about actually teaching this. I am really self-conscious about being able to earn their respect....I may just worry too much, resulting in trying too hard and failing.

However, in later recordings, Morgan showed feelings of growth and self-efficacy as she realized that she could communicate with the students. She wrote, "I really enjoyed interacting with the students," and, "I am not as intimidated anymore."

### **Beliefs Related to Students**

The previous data revealed Emily and Morgan's self perceptions and their perceptions of their role as teachers. In this section I describe their relationships with their students. In order to understand what teachers do in the classroom, it is necessary to understand how they see students (Grant & Sleeter, 1986).

Emily and Morgan recognized and talked about differences that were a part of their own school experiences. Emily talked about racial differences and differences in her classmates' motivation to learn. Morgan realized that she was usually "teacher's pet"; she also discussed ability groups (e.g., the brown birds and the blue birds). Recognizing this diversity in their own

schooling, it was natural for Emily and Morgan to expect diversity in the class at West End.

Indeed, in their writings and interviews, Emily and Morgan articulated their awareness of the diversity within the fourth grade class at West End. They both used metaphorical expressions and general labels to describe differences in students in the class. With Emily, several students were "special bond kids," or "favorites;" one girl was "a thorn in my side," "bright as a whip," and "a manipulative child." Other students were described with terms such as "gifted" and "funny and sensitive." Similarly, Morgan used terms such as "model students" and "our problem child" to characterize students. These terms indicated that Emily and Morgan, like most teachers, had different mental images of their students and used variant terms to represent them.

In an early reflective entry, Emily wrote about the complexity of teaching a diverse group. She stated:

Children bring so much to the classroom, and it sometimes seems impossible to teach people with so many issues. June wants to be called Michelle because of being teased last year, Ron takes ritalin twice daily, Eric is a resource student who sees an occupational therapist, and Sarah is allergic to everything.

Emily and Morgan discovered some student differences for themselves when they met the students on the first day of school. For example, Emily wrote in her journal, "Some resource students were easily identifiable." Other student

differences were enumerated by Mrs. Kent and other teachers at West End during the two day teacher planning period before school officially opened for the students.

Therefore, Emily and Morgan were cognizant of the past academic performance of many students before the students arrived. When I questioned Morgan about her early impressions of her students, she referred to this teacher planning period and what she had learned about early impressions. Morgan stated:

So she [Mrs. Kent] kinda gave us the background of the ones that she knew of. So we knew that Ronko was bright, and we knew who the inclusion students, like 504 students were. But I've also learned, see, when you hear about their abilities at the beginning of the year, you don't take into consideration, their family lives. And I think that has a lot to do, you just learn this. You get to know a lot about the students and where they are coming from and that explains a lot.

When Emily was questioned about her early impressions of the students she stated:

I'm so quick to judge, you know. I misjudged so many of them. That's a fault of mine. I'm so quick to like, analyze a kid, figure them out, and then hopefully not write them off. I don't think that I wrote them off as much because I have seen kids evolve and some kids that I thought were going to just be major problems, are not. Like some kids that I didn't expect would be major problems are.

During the semester, however, I realized that with Emily and Morgan, differences were not typically an excuse for lowering expectations, accepting inferior work, nor letting students just get by.

As I examined Emily and Morgan's beliefs and practices, I discovered two, sometimes interwoven, categories: academics and behavior. In the next section I use these major categories and connected themes to describe and analyze Emily and Morgan's beliefs and practices related to students and teaching.

### Academics

Research confirms that teachers often form expectations about a student's academic potential based on factors such as the student's past performance, race, socioeconomic status, gender, and language usage (Baron, Tom, & Cooper, 1985; Gougeon, 1993; Grant & Sleeter, 1986; Persell, 1977; Rist, 1970; Rubovitz & Maehr, 1973; Sadker & Sadker, 1986; Shakeshaft, 1986; Winfield, 1986). For many teachers, these biases have been internalized and remain unexamined. Not so for Emily and Morgan. For as they shared (both in written and verbal form) their perspectives of their students' academic potential and as they interacted with their students, their beliefs were brought to light. Characteristics that were illuminated were (a) respect for diversity, (b) independence, and (c) conscientiousness. Emily's vibrant words serve as the headings for the three themes under academics.

**"Students can read you!"**

During one of our first conversations, Emily noted, "students can read you!" In a sense, Emily's statement reiterated what I felt about attitudes and practices and it serves as a good starting point for this section.

Teachers' attitudes and practices relate to students what teachers believe about them as individuals and learners. In addition, teachers' attitudes and practices can influence how students perceive themselves and also how others perceive them. In other words, teachers' influence can be far reaching.

Emily talked about the importance of "people near you viewing you as a capable learner." She had reference to how teachers see students, how students think teachers see them, and how students think others (classmates) see them. Emily realized that students' perceptions are just as important as teachers' perceptions.

If students were able to "read" Emily, they probably sensed her desire to motivate, inspire, and help all students achieve. It was important to Emily that "every student felt important." She stated, "I believe in making every kid in there feel like they should be in there, and that they are represented in there."

This attitude was displayed by all three of the teachers, Emily, Morgan, and Mrs. Kent. According to Emily and Morgan, Mrs. Kent was responsible for creating their

comfortable classroom climate. Both preservice teachers credited Mrs. Kent with "raising a sense of social consciousness in the class" by establishing an atmosphere that allowed each student, regardless of race, gender, social class, ability , or cultural difference, to feel special and respected.

Morgan described Mrs. Kent's class as "open and socially aware," and "a place where you recognized the positive." She added:

She [Mrs. Kent] made sure to let them know that the classroom belonged to each individual, so they all had a responsibility to make it a pleasant atmosphere.

According to Emily, Mrs. Kent's influence was "so great." She continued:

I don't think that I will ever know how much I've picked up from her being there this year. And I tell her that. I said, "As a teacher, don't you know modeling is the best way you could have taught me. And she has taught me so much and I don't even know how much it has impacted [me], I know it's great.

Emily's use of the term "modeling" should not be confused with apprentice teaching where "the teacher-to-be learns the trade from the master; the teacher is the model, the student is the apprentice" (Valli, 1992, p.14). When Emily used the term "modeling" she was referring to the fact that Mrs. Kent practiced what she advocated. For example, not only did Mrs. Kent talk about respecting diversity, she treated each student with respect.

Early reflections in Morgan's journal revealed that students had not always respected the diversity in the class. She wrote:

I have seen some ugly behavior among the students. Specific students don't like the idea of cooperative grouping, and I can even see some prejudice attitudes in a few of the students.

There was great disparity in the academic performance of the students in the class. Several students were extremely bright. In fact, one girl had been tested and qualified for the gifted program. Conversely, five students in the class were slow learners, that is, they were at least two grade levels below average in reading. Despite ability differences, Emily and Morgan's expectations were generally high for all of the students, not the same expectations for all, but, high expectations. Emily and Morgan also credited Mrs. Kent with establishing high expectations for the students. During an interview, Emily described Mrs. Kent's work with one of the slower boys. She stated:

He really is very low and that is something about Mrs. Kent, she can take a kid who just really in the past has done this [indicating a downward slide]. He really started very low, but he did this [indicating an upward climb]. Gradually he got better and better and I think now he is making B's and C's which is very good because he was very weak.

In a journal entry, Emily wrote, "I think it is amazing that these children are writing essays in the fourth grade."



Similarly, Morgan was impressed with a math lesson that Mrs. Kent did with the class on the first day of school. She wrote, "I was shocked that she attempted this lesson on the first day of class (i.e., averaging and estimation)."

It is usually easy for teachers to work with and have high expectations for the gifted and more able students in a class. However, a close look at teachers' interactions with the slower students tells a lot about teachers' overall beliefs and expectations, their sense of efficacy. My data revealed that Emily and Morgan interacted frequently with the slower students, allowing them an active part in lessons. During our conversations, Emily and Morgan discussed ways that they made special adjustments for their slower students. I found that these changes and adjustments confirmed Emily and Morgan's desire to help all students work at their potential and also work successfully.

Sam, a tall, slender, African American was one of the slow students. Emily reported that she and the other teachers sometimes made accommodations in his (and the other slower students') assignments. She said they, "kinda made it [his work] easier." For example, in spelling, Sam was tested on 10 words rather than 20. It might appear that this was lowering expectations for the slower students. Emily called it "a success oriented

approach to teaching," an approach Emily said she derived from talks with Mrs. Kent and with her father. Emily felt that it was better for Sam, John, and some of the others to be successful with fewer words than to "start flunking every single test." She added, "This way he could learn the words. But what is worst, giving them something that they just can't do and they feel frustrated?"

In reading, Sam was sometimes paired with a stronger student. Emily explained:

But as far as independent reading, we put Sam with someone else who is done. We always had Mark who [would say], "I'm finished." Well, go help Sam. And, Sam is ok with that."

Despite weaknesses in spelling and reading, Sam had strengths in many areas. According to Emily:

Sam could do fourth grade math. He could do it so he knew that he wasn't just a total failure. He knew "I'm good at some things, I'm just not as good at others."

Sam had other areas of strength. When Emily reminisced about the class' bird unit, she remembered:

Sam was the best builder. He was the best. I had him do everything. I mean, I couldn't even nail anything right and I had him show us how to do it. So he could feel real good about that and he knew he was the best of everybody, you know.

John was another slow student. As Emily talked about how she might respond to him during a lesson she was also describing her usual treatment of all of the slower students. She expounded:

I am not going to probe and probe John for a certain answer when I feel that he probably won't know it.

There are times when I am not going to expect this child to be able to do that, I am just not. And there are times when I am going, "Come on, just tell me. I know you know this." And they go, "Oh, ok." Then they try to figure it out.

I often observed Emily as she reminded her students of their strengths. For example, during a small group session as Eric (speech and motor problems) muttered through his sentences, Emily noted the strengths in his work. When he had finished, Emily told him that he wrote well and everything was in proper sequence. Emily's statements surely helped Eric to feel comfortable and also confirmed her confidence in his ability. In fact, Eric frequently asked questions and volunteered answers. He never appeared shy about speaking in class.

Emily often wrote in her journal about the successes of her slower students. For example:

John walked to his desk filled with pride knowing that literature he created brought great fun to his classmates.

I watched some of the weakest students in this class take off with this activity, but the two smartest students could not handle the task. I have been noticing that gifted children have a hard time handling simple tasks.

Emily accommodated individual differences by giving extra "wait time" to students who required it, and providing assistance and prompting. This special assistance was given when Emily felt it appropriate for she encouraged independence (covered under the next topic). Emily also read test items to students who were weak in

reading. She recalled that this was done frequently at the beginning of the school year in order to determine what the students knew about various subject areas, not just how well they were able to read the test.

We read the test. I know like for social studies and science test and stuff, things that don't evaluate reading, we read them. I don't know if we kept doing it at the end.

Many times the teachers retested students who had performed poorly on a test. During one of the conference periods, they discussed students who had been retested or tested in an alternate manner and the students performed well.

Morgan stated that on several occasions the teachers tested students "one on one." Additionally, all of the teachers sometimes adjusted the grading for the slower students.

They were graded according to their effort and ability not by the same standards used for the brighter students. This was particularly true for writing activities such as essays. Emily explained:

...those grades for some of the kids were inflated. But the parents knew about it and we all knew. But why give the kid D's and F's all year long.

When Emily worked with the class on making an outline, she required different activities from each group based on the groups' abilities. Every group was taught to outline; some groups had more advanced lessons. In addition, Emily felt that her "integrated lessons" allowed all students to achieve success.

I think the kind of integrated lessons that we taught, if it was too hard for them... they did have parts of the integrated lessons that they could achieve success.

In an integrated lesson, the topic or theme is studied across subject areas rather than fragmented into specific content areas. When information and skills are presented in context and in an integrated manner, all students are more likely to see the relevance of the information.

Emily and Morgan used a variety of activities and materials to reach the perceptual learning differences in the class. Their lessons were challenging, meaningful, and encouraged collaboration. Emily's lessons included verbal explanations, demonstrations, charts, drawings and outlines. In addition, Emily made many manipulatives to help the students grasp the difficult concept of fractions. In an evaluation report, Mrs. Kent commented on Emily's effectiveness with different students. She wrote, "Miss Clay [Emily] is aware of individual learning styles of children and addresses these during instruction." I would apply these same sentiments to Morgan despite the fact that I only observed her a few times. Morgan used numerous experiments to teach the lessons that I observed on light and sound. One lesson lasted well over an hour. Morgan's college supervisor was also observing and was surprised that Morgan was able to keep the lesson going for such a long time. The key was that the students were interested and involved throughout the lesson.

Emily and Morgan recognized that if students were to do their best work they had to work at their own pace. Therefore, students were often allowed to go across the hall to a cafeteria table to complete work "so that they would not be disturbed by students going to centers." In some classrooms, students may be penalized and even humiliated if they do not work within the prescribed time limit. This was never the case in this room. Many students, not just the lower ability students, took advantage of the quiet, extra time at the cafeteria table when it was offered.

Because Emily and Morgan believed that "students can read you," they were conscious of creating an atmosphere that respected cultural differences. This directly affected Ahmad and James, two students whose religious persuasion precluded their participation in various classroom activities. Several times during the semester, Emily and Mrs. Kent talked to the class about why Ahmad did not eat from sun up until sun down on certain religious holidays, and why he often fell asleep in class during days of religious fasting. They also explained why James did not celebrate the customary American holidays. Ahmad and James' cultural differences sometimes required Emily and Morgan to provide supplemental classwork that did not interfere with their religious customs.

In addition to accepting religious diversity, Emily frequently emphasized respecting other differences. For example, she read stories dealing with language and racial diversity; engaged the students in a discussion of the American Indian from the Indians' perspective; created a story about immigration from a Polish immigrant's perspective; and developed a unit to explain slavery from a slave's perspective. Emily's slavery unit was written after realizing that many of her students, especially her African American students, did not know about slavery and the Underground Railroad.

I asked Emily why she developed this unit since the topic of slavery was not a part of the regular fourth grade curriculum. Emily explained that as she helped Liz (an African American) with a research question about the Underground Railroad, she discovered that Liz did not know the word slaves. Emily stated:

And I said, "Do you know what this word is?" And she said, "No." And I knew that she hadn't because I was saying it over and over....And I gave her some brief, lame explanation of slavery and it bothered me to do that. And I hated to answer the question but I thought, let me just give her a little bit and then I'll get back to this.

Emily felt that Dr. Trotter, one of her college professors, was instrumental in her preparation for and dedication to issues of diversity.

I guess I attribute most of my preparation for that to Dr. Trotter. She is just a very big promoter of multiculturalism....It doesn't have to be a unit or a week or a month, it can just be in little everythings.

Little things all of the time, you know, little conversations. Dr. Trotter, I guess, has made me see the importance of that. And it is just so important that these kids deal with that.

Weeks later, Emily again referred to Dr. Trotter. She stated:

Dr. Trotter had a big impact on me. She is just a very understanding teacher, a very compassionate teacher, you know. I was talking about this with Morgan. My compassion for people has grown in the past year. I don't know why. It is a combination of things....Trotter was always a very compassionate teacher and sorta taught us how to be compassionate teachers. With the multicultural, with the storytelling, everything she taught, that was kinda the goal...just because it makes kids feel good, you know.

Emily tried to present information so that no student felt like an "outsider." She also explored other differences in students, such as why some students like to sit and read while other students like to run and play.

Morgan observed that as the class read various books, Mrs. Kent addressed diversity and respect. She wrote, "Mrs. Kent stresses a lot on the issue of respect. The students learn about respect for the environment and for Native Americans." In addition, Morgan stated that because Mrs. Kent established a warm, comfortable climate the students were able to talk about issues such as the Simpson trial and gender concerns. Morgan explained:

Part of my project was their perceptions of gender. So much came out [other] than gender. Race and everything just came out. And I think it was because we all established that relationship that we could all talk about things.



Both preservice teachers admitted that they had not always held high expectations for each student. In fact, when I questioned them about their early impressions of their students, Emily and Morgan were quite candid. They quickly stated that their initial expectations for academic success were lower for Ahmad, the little boy from Kuwait.

Morgan stated:

I thought his [Ahmad] English would not be as well as it is. He is very articulate. Actually, he is a very bright student and has a lot to contribute to certain topics....and honestly, I did, I thought that there might be a language barrier or something which proved me wrong.

Emily's concerns were similar. She remarked, "There are a lot of things about the English language that he doesn't know. He has a lot of misconceptions."

Emily thought that she would also have difficulty teaching Eric. She was concerned about his ability to communicate and his poor motor coordination.

I thought that would be a real big trial. Getting through to this kid is going to be like hard, and it isn't. I thought when I first got in there that it was going to be a problem, you know.

Despite early apprehensions about the academic potential of some students, Emily and Morgan soon recognized that all students had strengths. Through their actions and teacher directed conversations, Emily, Morgan, and Mrs. Kent helped the class to accept the diversity in the classroom and in the world. The teachers seemed constantly cognizant of the fact that "students can read you."

**"Removing the students from our hips"**

In her journal, Emily wrote about developing "independent writers," but the words expressed her general sentiments about herself and about her students. She wrote, "We are trying to wean the students off of us by teaching them skills that will help them become more independent writers." By using the term "we," Emily indicated that she was not tackling the problem alone. Additional comments confirmed this. Emily wrote, "The three of us usually discuss ways to make the students work and not only us!" Emily believed that if the students did not develop independence they would be stifled.

This next week we will begin the process of removing the students from our hips! These students are not working to their potential when we are so readily available. Now that the students know what to expect from us, it is time to let them become more independent students.

Through observation, I determined that Mrs. Kent encouraged independence in her students. For example, several times during the semester, students in the class served as guides for visitors to the room much like a docent at a museum would do. The assigned students walked the visitors around the class, explained projects and activities, demonstrated work at the computers, and answered questions. Very often this scenario took place without disrupting the teacher and the remainder of the class. The student guides were generally the higher and

average ability students. The students appeared confident and comfortable as they carried out their responsibilities.

Morgan was delighted that the students were taught to be independent and responsible. She wrote about instances that were not directly related to academics but contributed to the general tone of independence:

The students also have to clean up after themselves when they are finished eating. It is great they are taught to take on this responsibility.

Mrs. Kent began the class by asking the students to clean up after themselves better....The way Mrs. Kent went about the issue of cleaning up was very effective.

Emily and Morgan saw themselves as "motivators" and "guides" in helping students gain independence. Morgan helped her students develop independence following a reading assignments when she urged them to "Raise your hand and tell me how you enjoyed the book." This allowed the students to share their personal feelings and reflections aside from the usual comprehension questions that Morgan and other teachers ask. In addition, Morgan encouraged her students to make predictions and to justify their answers. This entailed risk-taking and seemed to have boosted the students' confidence.

Emily and Morgan wanted their students to be independent; yet, they learned that independence must also be tempered with assistance and instruction from the teacher, especially for fourth graders. My first observations of Morgan revealed that she was more willing

than Emily to provide immediate assistance to the students. She circulated frequently and helped students who raised their hand. Morgan's quiet questioning manner enabled her students to complete assignments without being "spoon-fed" the answers.

In a similar, yet more forceful manner, Emily walked and even prodded her students through activities. Rather than simply giving answers, Emily, figuratively pulled, poked, and twisted answers from her students. She pushed, encouraged, and demanded her students to research and solve problems. I often heard "I got it, I got it," or, "Yesssss, yesssss," after Emily had guided a student through a problem. The following brief exchange is typical of what transpired when a student had difficulty finding the answer to a question.

Emily: Let's go to the index. What do you look up in the index? What are the key words?

Boy: Sioux City [student searches in the index and points to the words Sioux City].

Emily: That's it!

Boy: [The boy locates the page, searches for the answer, and yells excitedly.] I found it, I found it.

As a motivator, Emily sometimes was very stern with her students, particularly when she felt that they were

wasting time. I observed Amy as she solicited help from Emily. This was the third time within as many minutes.

Emily firmly and calmly stated:

It's on there, Amy. I'm giving you five minutes to find it. You are not dumb, Amy. You can find it. Other people are waiting for that book.

Within a few minutes Amy had found the answer and was writing it on her paper.

The class spent several days researching information about the mid-western states. Emily and Mrs. Kent divided the class into three groups. Before each group began to work, Emily asked the same question,

Emily: Tell me what I don't want to hear when you get a book?

Ronko: I can't find the answer.

Emily: The answers are in there [the book] because I looked them up.

At times, Emily appeared to ignore students who needed help. I observed her working with Jacob, one of the slower students. He was having difficulty locating the answer to a research question. Several times, Jacob asked for assistance but Emily would merely tell him that the information was on the page. "I can't answer the question for you," she stated. "That's your job. It is in there, it is in there. Read it again."

Emily did not give Jacob the guidance that I had become accustomed to seeing. Finally, Mrs Kent walked

passed Jacob and he asked her for help. Mrs. Kent determined that he did not know the meaning of a key word in the question and therefore was having difficulty finding the correct answer. After Mrs. Kent helped Jacob, he was able to quickly locate the answer.

As I thought about this encounter, I wondered if Emily's sense of high expectations and independence was at the expense of determining a child's readiness for an activity through determining the child's prior knowledge. It appeared that Emily did not ascertain the cause of this student's confusion. Later, I questioned Emily about her demeanor with Jacob. She explained:

It doesn't surprise me that I was doing that to Jacob because Jacob is the kind of "hold my hand throughout the entire lesson and I will do it." And he can do it. So I probably just, I probably should have helped him a little more. But, I had to get in the habit of "Jacob you can do this." Cause he is very much, "What is this?" he is like "red light" right at first. "I can't do it." So he was probably having a real problem and I just blew him off.

This treatment was not the norm for Emily. In fact, two girls in the class wrote about Emily and Morgan's usual concern and practices.

Ms. Clay [Emily] was a good teacher. She explained everything to you. Now Ms. Blake [Morgan] if we didn't understained [sic] something she will explain it to you, so does Ms. Clay [.]. They are the best teachers.

Mrs. Clay took the time to help me that's what I like about her. I liked Mrs. Blake because when I didn't understand she helped me. She helped me by reteaching a lesson so I could understand. She didn't just give me a worksheet and say here do this.

Students generally received assistance when it was requested.

Most observations revealed that neither Emily nor Morgan dominated classroom interactions. With the exception of the week that Emily prepared the students for standardized testing, the students were active participants in their learning. Emily and Morgan first spent time working through skills with the entire class before assigning independent work. In addition, they offered multiple strategies. They took every opportunity to pass along helpful information. They wanted the students to know all the little tricks and tactics that would help them become independent learners.

During Morgan's lesson on the light spectrum, she taught the students a mnemonic strategy that would be useful in remembering the order of colors in a rainbow. "ROY G. BIV" represents the first letter of each color in the rainbow. Morgan also encouraged the students to speculate, predict, and hypothesize about lessons and events that were studied. For example, as the students colored circles for a light spectrum, Morgan asked, "Why do you think it [light spectrum] is going to appear white?" Several students offered their ideas, including Sarah. After a few predictions, she playfully replied, "I have no idea." Because of the comfortable atmosphere, none of the students appeared tense. They were free to speculate, to

voice their own opinions without fear of ridicule. In essence, they were becoming independent thinkers.

Emily wanted her students to be empowered; she wanted them to learn how to learn. Her lessons usually contained statements such as, "Here's a trick...", "A good habit to get into whenever you...", "I'm going to tell you a secret..." "Y'all, that's a dead give away..." "Draw pictures if you need to (math lesson)..." "If you are having trouble thinking of something to write...", "Don't do it real fast. Check it over real closely," "An outline is like a skeleton; you have the bear bones..."

Emily also personalized lessons with statements from her past, strategies that helped her. For example, during one lesson she stated, "Some people have found shortcuts. But for me, when I was learning fractions, it was easier to just do the long way."

The class did many writing activities and Emily offered many techniques and strategies. "Write down your ideas, brainstorm," she yells. She also tells them that people rarely just sit down and write, rather, they brainstorm ideas. Emily and the class worked together on writing story summaries, writing outlines, and identifying topic sentences. Emily had many ways of grabbing the students' attention and giving suggestions.

As stated earlier, Emily's full week of teaching preceded the week of parish-wide testing. Mrs. Kent



encouraged Emily to spend most of the time reviewing for the test, in other words, drilling. Emily used her usual wit and passion to get them ready for the test. She taught them "tricks" and "strategies" for test taking and she gave them her usual pep talks. For example:

...the trick is to read the answer with the word in it to see if it is correct. They are counting on you not to read the whole list.

Y'all, this is so cinchy. The only time you'll make a mistake is if you answer too quickly. Take your time.

On the whole, this is very easy. But, when you get tired you just [she blows and motions upward with her hands]. Just tell yourself, "I'm taking this one time and I'm going to do it right!"

Emily usually gave good feedback that was not simply acknowledgement statements such as "Good" or "Great." Emily wanted her students to know their strengths. She wanted them to have specific, meaningful feedback. For example, after listening to Gary read, Emily stated, "Very good, Gary, everything was in sequence. I could see that you put a lot of thought and work into it." After listening to Liz, Emily said, "I like the way you gave the cause and then the effect." These types of feedback statements (affirmation feedback) let students know why a response was correct, and it assisted students in making judgements about their own work. In helping students to become independent, Emily tried to help them analyze their own work and "not wait and be dependent on the teacher's judgement."

Neither Emily nor Morgan were lavish with their praise, nor were they "phony sincere" (Emily's term). In a sense, this would have been counter to their desire to develop both intrinsic motivation and independence within their students. Yet, they provided enough praise that students who needed more external motivation were satisfied and encouraged.

Emily sometimes felt that she was having difficulty evaluating the students' comprehension and knowing when they were ready for more independence in an activity. She stated:

I have talked to Mrs. Kent before and I've said, "I just don't have a good feeling for this" and she says "Well it kinda comes with experience, what kids have a hard time learning and what they have an easy time with.

Morgan's journal revealed similar concerns. She wrote:

Accurately assessing various student activities is an area I feel I need improvement....This is an area I feel will come with more experience, and I feel I also need to jot down notes justifying each student's score I give.

Emily and Morgan discovered that many of the slower students had trouble when given too much independence. Emily recorded in her journal, "Some of the resource students have a hard time handling the freedom of this task." Morgan wrote about the difficulties that the slower students had when the class "broke into groups to read and discuss what they were reading." In addition, she wrote, "Some of the students who have difficulty in reading don't

really comprehend what they are reading, and they easily get distracted."

As Morgan continued, her journal entry explained how Mrs. Kent handled this situation. Morgan wrote:

Mrs. Kent had hesitations about letting them continue in groups, but she decided it would be best. She feels that they become more interested when she reads the beginning of the chapter out loud, and she has them read the remainder individually or with a partner.

Mrs. Kent did not want to completely take away the independence of the slower students.

In a journal entry, Emily discussed the problems related to independence and varying ability levels. She wrote:

Some of our students work very slowly or not at all during independent work. These are usually the slow students in the class, and they have trouble concentrating when given too much freedom. I had to threaten these students into working during this catch up time, and they did work. Unfortunately, these students did not do independent work. It took the teacher to make them do it. It is so hard to help students to become more responsible in the classroom.

Students of varying abilities were often paired or grouped in order to help everyone become more independent of the teachers. Despite difficulties, even the slower students were given opportunities to function independent of the teachers. Cooperative grouping was used most frequently during Reading, Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts lessons that involved the computer. Emily and Morgan recognized that students not only learned at different rates, but that they also learned from each other

for each student had strengths that they brought to the group.

"Oh, this is so easy!"

From elementary school through college, Emily had always been a serious student, almost fanatical about school. In fact, she stated that she was "too concerned about grades and performance." One student, Mark, was much like Emily. In early interviews, Emily talked about Mark:

There is this little kid in my class now who reminds me of myself....He's really high pressure about that load [school work]....Yeh, he's very nervous about his grades, too....He's cried before, too, when he's made like a C or something.

Emily stated that Mark was "a straight A student and he is like parnoid about his grades." She explained:

Mark is super conscious. Much more conscious than any of those other kids about what was graded this way. "Why did I get -2 here?" And when he got back a paper it was like "Excuse me, you've taken points off this grade, why?"

Mark was so like Emily that she "tried to not stress grades with him." She wanted to be a teacher who relieved some of the pressure that Mark probably felt, pressure that she had felt as a child.

Whenever I give him praise it is never about grades, it is never about being smart. It is never about knowing the answers. It is always about being a good kid, being nice to somebody....So I try to nurture that side of him that can let go of some of that [pressure] and enjoy some of the class and not take it so seriously.

Emily felt that Mark was too serious about school, just as she had been. Conversely, she believed that most of her students were too relaxed about school. She remarked:

I see things in my fourth grade students that I've been so upset with. Say if I had done the wrong spelling unit, that would have crushed me. And they come and say (very unaffected), "Miss Clay, I studied the wrong unit."

As Emily continued to compare the fourth graders at West End with herself, she surmised, "They sometimes think they know it all."

On occasion, Morgan also believed that the students wanted to take the easy way out. She wrote:

Most of the students just wanted to find the answers to the topics listed on the outline and hardly any of them wanted to read their book to find an answer.

During a reading lesson, when students appeared lethargic, Morgan stated, "Come on y'all. I know you can do this." Later the same day as the students prepared to work on their travel brochures, Morgan intimated that they needed to get serious.

Morgan: A lot of you goofed off yesterday.

Student: What do you mean goofed off, played around?

Morgan: Yes, played around.

Morgan realized that students sometimes "goofed off," however, it was Emily who continually voiced concern about her students' work ethic.

In many ways, most of Emily and Morgan's lessons were similar to hundreds of lessons that I have observed. They introduced the lesson by letting the students know what they would be doing and why, provided instruction and examples for the whole class, allowed the students to apply the skills with the teacher's assistance and, encouraged independent practice. Yet, to help their students succeed, they usually moved beyond these basic procedures. First I report Emily's practices, then Morgan's practices.

Emily felt that her students' lackadaisical attitude toward math was especially notable. On one occasion as Emily prepared the class for a retake on a math test, she stated, "You think math is easy. Word problems aren't easy!" Emily was about to give a retake because most of her students had failed the first test. Despite Emily's efforts to prepare them for the test, she felt that the students were not focusing. In instances like this, Emily often changed from her intended plans in order to help students comprehend the difficult material. "I'm going to back up my lesson for today and teach it tomorrow," she stated.

Similarly, during another math lesson, Emily worked fervently at the board and exclaimed, "This is what you do in Math. You say, oh this is so easy, and then you bomb out." Emily tried to motivate her students with comments such as, "Some math grades really need some help. This is

a good opportunity to raise your math grade." In addition, Emily said that she tried "overkill" to help students learn difficult material. "I try to overkill, especially with math. I know that math is hard for those kids to get." Despite Emily's pep talks, warnings, and "overkill, test scores were not improving.

Emily seemed intent on empowering her students with strategies. Emily constantly encouraged the students to question and think. During a math lesson she calmly and reassuringly told the class,

Show me how you add. Show me how you divide. Make sure you don't make dumb mistakes. It is so easy to make dumb mistakes on these.

Her words may seem harsh but this was Emily's way of grabbing her students' attention and pushing them. Emily didn't tip-toe around what she wanted to say. However, her rapid-fire speech was usually filled with concern and emotion. Emily described her approach, "I just raised their awareness a bit in hopes that they are more careful in the future."

Emily knew that students were not understanding all of their school work but she blamed it on taking school too lightly, not focusing. To remedy this, Emily sometimes offered additional assistance to students after lessons and before tests, in fact, right up to the minute of a test. On different occasions she made comments such as:

If you have a special problem with anything I did, I expect you to come sit down here. I don't want to say

"Jan, you know you don't know this." I don't want to do this. For some of you this is cinchy.

Who doesn't get this? It's okay if you don't get it. [Emily does not stop to see if any hands are going to go up.] Raise your hand if you got both of those correct? [All hands go up.]

Emily would ask, "How many of you got them all right?"

Several times I observed students raising their hand who had missed several answers or who had changed incorrect answers. One girl hid her incorrect answers and changed them when she thought no one was looking.

On a few occasions Emily called specific students to come for help. However, most times, seeking extra help was a voluntary activity. Students came if they felt that they needed help. During the first weeks, I watched as many students who should have sought help remained in their seats. These students were the ones I often observed copying from classmates.

After watching this scenario on several occasions, I was curious as to Emily's thoughts on why certain students did not come for help. "Was it because they do not know that they do not know or are they too embarrassed to come for help?" I asked. Emily replied that she felt they were not aware that they did not know. I pondered over Emily's response. If the students sometimes "think they know it all" (as has been recorded), if they think "things are so easy," and if they are not doing well, perhaps, they do



not know that they do not know. This was what I had asked Emily.

I understood Emily's dilemma, for as Mrs. Kent had stated, "some things come with experience." Emily strongly believed that students frequently err when deciding whether or not they know something. However, she was not doing what I thought could partially remedy the situation. In other words, I wondered why Emily did not use her usual forcefulness and tact to require students to come for help, especially those who she knew needed help.

As strongly as Emily believed that the students took school too lightly, she was relying on the students to know what they did not know. She was relying on the students' to self monitor and self correct their learning. For most of the students, however, their metacognitive ability had not developed to that extent.

Gary was unlike the majority of the class. Gary had a keen sense of what he knew and did not know. During one lesson, I heard Gary exclaim that he understood what he was supposed to do, but he still did not know how to do it. Emily also recognized this quality in Gary.

Gary...would just have a stroke if he is not understanding it. He will just have a stroke. "I'm not too sure about this, Miss Clay. I'm not getting this."

Emily liked this about Gary for this was indicative of the metacognitive ability that she yearned for in all of her students. She stated:

With Gary you know just what is going on in his head. If every kid were like Gary, you would know who was getting it and who wasn't. He was very confident in saying that he didn't get it.

However, most students did not seem to be able to self-evaluate to the extent that Gary did.

During these early weeks, I also noticed that most students who did not come for help were African American. On one occasion, as students gathered near Emily for extra help, I counted ten students - nine were White and one was African American. "Can you think of any reason why the Black students do not come for help?" I asked during an interview in my office. Emily replied:

I really never noticed that. Maybe uh...I wonder myself, if that is how it was for all of the groups I called. Maybe my White children were more comfortable asserting themselves, "I need help with this and it is no big deal. It doesn't mean that I am inferior." I'm not so sure that is how the Black kids feel when they don't know something. I see Ann, feel[s] ashamed. John does not even want to be looked at, "Don't even call me, don't look at me too hard." Sam won't look at you in the eyes.

One morning as the students took a math test, Emily engaged me in quiet conversation about Ann, one of the African American students.

Ann is kinda embarrassed that she doesn't know. She doesn't like the attention called to her. If I would go to her doing a test she would go like, "Ok, yeah, yeah. Go away, let me just fail it."

On another occasion, I questioned Emily about Jane, a White, slower student who did not seek extra help when it was offered. Emily explained that it was hard to decide when to pull students over and make them get extra help.

She was concerned about embarrassing them. "I don't want them to feel that they are dumb and need the help." As we finished our talk, Emily stated, "I will really praise those who come for help and do well." She felt that this might alleviate the situation and encourage others to seek help.

In this area, Emily's beliefs and practices were reminiscent of Noddings' (1984) "theory of caring." According to Noddings, there are multiple perspectives on what it means to care. For caring to take place, it must be received as caring by the one cared for. I wondered how the students perceived Emily's actions. Did they receive being left alone as caring?

Van Galen (1993), expounding on caring, wrote, "caring involves making judgments about what is in the best interests of others" (p.8). I have no doubt that Emily was concerned about the welfare of her students, for as Noddings (1984) wrote, the "one-caring desires the well-being of the cared-for" (p.24). However, Emily's sensitivity and caring for the feelings of her students may in actuality have harmed them in ways that she had not expected. Emily was probably able to "read" her students correctly (they may have taken school too lightly, or they may have been embarrassed), yet, she failed to do that which was in the best interest of her students. In her attempt to respect students as well as make them

independent, she failed to assume a more active role in assuring success for all students.

As the semester neared its end, Emily talked about helping students determine when they did and did not understand school assignments. She stated:

I [do] a lot of questioning and having them do practice work in class because I think that they don't really know whether they know it until they have to do it on their own. And I have them ask questions and evaluate what they do.

Emily also explained, "...you can't expect to say, who knows it. You can't expect that to be an honest answer." Emily talked further, about how she was accommodating her slower learners.

A lot of it was when every body gets working on their seatwork and whatever, you kinda go to them and reexplain. You kinda get a small group and "Okay, y'all come up here." You hate to leave [it] up to whoever doesn't understand [to] come up here because they wont come up there. So, "you come, you come, you come, let me explain this to you." So that way they are getting it even if they don't admit it, you know.

By semester's end, Emily realized that most students had not developed the ability to strategize and come to logical and analytical conclusions about their work (although they were growing in this area). Therefore, as Emily took the role of the competent adult, she helped students accomplish that which was just beyond their immediate grasp, much in the manner described by Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development. According to Vygotsky, children in the zone of proximal development are able to interact with a more competent person (e.g.,

teacher or more advanced peer) in order to complete a task that they would not be able to do independently.

As I observed Morgan, I realized that her calm, quiet demeanor allowed her to be more receptive to what was going on around her. She appeared to continually scan the room for evidence that the students were comprehending the information. She seemed to anticipate that the students might take the lesson too lightly, perhaps because of an early incidence recorded in her journal.

Morgan's data revealed that she sometimes blamed herself for the students' weaknesses and failures. She sometimes underestimated the difficulty of various tasks. In a self evaluation report, Morgan recalled a math lesson. Morgan wrote,

After discovering that 50% of the class failed my area/perimeter test I was crushed. I had originally thought that I had done a wonderful job at choosing an effective sequence of lessons and practice worksheets for the students....Because we were trying to rush this math unit in before the holidays, the students suffered.

Morgan continued:

Mrs. Kent gave me forewarning that area and perimeter were very difficult concepts to teach to fourth graders, but I was a disbeliever. This experience emphasized the fact that there is much more than just choosing good activities to teaching a lesson.

This experience, taking a concept too lightly, was a turning point for Morgan. She concluded:

From this experience I feel I have grown tremendously. It is an eye-opening event when half of your class fails a test! I felt as though their performance was a reflection of my teaching ability. I want to do

everything on my part to ensure this never happens again.

Morgan asked numerous questions. She employed questioning for several purposes. Some questions encouraged the students to think creatively and independently while other questions determined whether students had grasped concepts and understood directions. The second type of questions were like filters that caught students' misperceptions and allowed congruent information to pass. Morgan stated that she used questions to help her know when the students were comprehending the information. The questions could also help students realize when they were taking their lessons too lightly. Here are various questions from Morgan's teaching indicating this:

Tasha, tell me what to do after you finish coloring?

How do you think I divided the circle?

What did I do to find out how big to make it [circle]?

Why does it look yellowish-white when you spin it?

At the semester's end, Morgan was cognizant of determining students' prior knowledge whenever new information was introduced. For instance, before the class began work on travel brochures, Morgan showed several sample brochures and discussed the various types of information that would be included. Also, before Morgan's lesson on convex and concave lenses, she offered meaningful examples and reminded the students of their real life

experiences with these lens. Because the fourth graders brought different background experiences to the class, it was imperative that Morgan not rush into these activities.

As I observed the students, I was frequently reminded that teachers and students often value school differently, they have different visions. For example, one morning, following a field trip to an animal reserve, Morgan talked excitedly about a writing activity that was related to the trip.

Morgan:                We're going to write a cinquain. It  
                              will be fun!

Student # 1:        Oh, boy. That's bad!

Student # 2:        You said that was a vacation trip.  
                              We're not going to have to write are  
                              we?"

After a brief discussion, Morgan worked with the class on composing a sample cinquin. As the students began their independent work, Mrs. Kent cautioned:

Write good ones that are representative of what we saw. Don't just write any old thing. Don't just choose something to get through.

Mrs. Kent's words echoed the general sentiment that students are often slothful when school work is involved.

Morgan and Mrs. Kent circulated as the students worked.

Later, Mrs. Kent added:

I like the way Ronko is putting in some good words. Some of you are using first grade words. There are some better words that you can use. If you can't

think of one there is a thesaurus over here that you can use.

As noted earlier, most of my weeks at West End were spent observing Emily. However, as I watched both of the preservice teachers, I was reminded of the drive and determination that I had witnessed in many of my teachers when I was in elementary school. Like my teachers, they never seemed to give up on the students. They never stopped pushing them and demanding their best work. Many of my teachers possessed the drive of Emily and the patience and perseverance of Morgan.

### Behavior

Emily and Morgan's classroom was usually an active place. In fact, it was probably more active than most classrooms because of the emphasis on cooperative group work. Despite all of the activity and constant flow of visitors, the majority of the students were well behaved. While I was present, I never saw anyone sent to the office, nor did I hear of the teachers having to call a parent (However, Emily and Morgan's journals revealed that these did occur). Most of the behavior problems that I did observe in the class were minor (e.g., students talking and moving at inappropriate times).

In working with student behavior, as in working with academics, Emily and Morgan saw their role primarily as helping their students develop independence and self



control. They wanted their students to learn to monitor their own behavior. By the end of the semester, both preservice teachers recognized that student diversity often required interacting with students in different ways.

Rick and Sarah, two bright students, had very different stories. As will be seen, they were dealt with in different ways, especially by Emily. The first section describes how Emily and Morgan dealt with a few individual students. Some were "special bond kids," and one, "a thorn in my side." The second section explores Emily and Morgan's general beliefs and practices related to behavior in their classroom.

#### **"A special bond kid" and "A thorn in my side"**

Emily and Morgan seemed to have been aware of the differences in their students and as the semester progressed they learned to respect the academic and behavioral uniqueness and diversity of the students. Emily and Morgan discovered that their students brought different life experiences to the classroom. These experiences often influences how the students behaved in the class. For instance, two little White girls had been abandoned by their mothers and lived with various relatives. Emily and Morgan each gravitated to a different girl. Emily described her relationship with her special bond kid. She stated:

She needs like a mother figure. I mean, you can see that so strongly. She needed the hugs much more than

anybody in the classroom. She hugs ten times more than the other fourth graders do. I knew her background and I just like her, I like her personality.

Morgan took the other girl "under her wing and that was really good for her." Morgan described the effect that she had on her special student:

The student whom I chose for my case study ended up having a lot more problems than I ever anticipated. She is in a situation where she lives with her aunt and uncle because her mom did not want her when she was a toddler....I had originally chosen my student because of her attention-getting behavior in the classroom, and I found out, shortly after, that there was valid justification for her pouting and crying fits during class. Once she found me trustworthy and confided in me there was an improvement in her behavior. She was crying out for attention and I became the outlet she needed for self-control.

One boy did not like to be shown special attention; he did not like the praise and stickers that the other students desired. This boy's parents were from a foreign country and had lived in a different culture. Various experiences had shaped the students and they could not always be treated the same.

Emily and Morgan quickly discovered that students were different in different settings. At the beginning of the school year several teachers warned Emily and Morgan about several students, particularly Rick and Sarah. Emily had frequent contact with Rick, an African American boy who was on ritalin. However, no outstanding contacts were noted between Morgan and Rick. Both preservice teachers, in fact, all three teachers interacted constantly with Sarah.

According to Emily, teachers considered Rick "a behavior problem". Emily stated:

If you could talk to some of those third grade teachers, they can't believe Rick. He has had trouble on the bus, on the playground. Just whenever he comes into our class he is a different student. Just something about our classroom, you know, he just straightens up.

Emily reflected:

I tried right off to see what would work with him. It is like I would do everything to find something right he's doing. So with Rick I'll go to him sometimes and say "We don't want us to get off on a bad day, you are doing good....I just pull for something with Rick, and he appreciates that.

Emily felt that she had Rick's respect because she was not "preachy" with him. She reasoned with him in a special way.

"Now look..." and that's how I talked to Rick. "Now come on Rick, what's the deal..." And I wouldn't have said, "Now Richard, you know better than that." I wasn't preachy. I don't like that.

Rick was one of Emily's special bond kids, one of her favorites. Yet Emily was firm and fair with him. "He is a sweet kid," she said, "he is very sweet." It was obvious that she was striving to help Rick develop into a strong, self-controlled person. One morning Rick became frustrated during a small group session. "I'm working my butt off with all this s\_\_\_\_," he said. Emily talked to him privately and gave him a detention slip. Emily stated that Rick was surprised that he got a detention slip.

And he was just like, he was shocked. But I think it was important for him to know that, "Yes I'm his buddy and I can relate to him and I'm very compassionate

toward him, but, you cursed in the group and that is totally unacceptable."

Emily preferred not to lecture her students about behavior.

As Emily explained, "Kids, if you treat them adult-like, like if you treat them like they can handle it, they will."

Emily added:

I just like to be able to talk to those kids and have them feel like I can reason with them, that I can talk with a kid and make him or her feel, you know, they are big enough to be able to be spoken to on an adult type level.

Emily had this type of rapport with most of the students.

However, with Sarah, this relationship was slow in developing.

Sarah was a petite, White girl from a wealthy family.

According to Emily:

Her Mom [Sarah's] has been married several times and she has everything in the world. She is allergic to everything on earth. She'll take advantage of any situation. I don't handle her well, I'll be the first to admit.

Early in the semester, Emily described Sarah as "bright as a whip" and "a thorn in my side." She also said that Sarah "had a lot of anger in her." Emily seemed to have been void of patience where Sarah was concerned. In fact, my field notes revealed that Sarah was constantly reprimanded for one thing or the other.

Morgan's early journal entries acknowledged that she also had difficulties with Sarah. For example, Morgan wrote:

The biggest problem I had was with a student. She has been giving all three teachers problems for the past two weeks. Last week in the lunch line she hit another student and I tried talking to her but she ignored me. After I pulled her out of line she still persisted to ignore me and she got real mad. Well, Ms. Kent had a conference with Sarah's mother, and her mother took away Sarah's tv privileges.

On another occasion, Morgan described a lesson that had gone well. She also commented on Sarah's behavior. Morgan recorded:

There were no abnormal occurrences and, overall, it was a great day! Even Sarah, our problem child, was better than usual.

As the semester passed, I noticed that Emily was changing her approach with Sarah. Emily appeared to reason with Sarah more than she had previously. I mentioned this to Emily and she acknowledged the change.

Yes, and that's totally because of Kent. Mrs. Kent has really helped me see what helps and I just have such an easier time with it now. It takes a lot of time and patience that I'll have to acquire.

Emily elaborated on her former treatment of Sarah. She stated:

I felt that she is not doing what she is supposed to be doing, she shouldn't be given extra attention because she just needs to do it like the rest of them. Kinda like a real "tough love" approach I guess. "You are going to have to do it and you are going to just have to accept that."

I thought, why do I have to do that for Sarah when I don't have to do that for anybody else. It aggravated me that I had to give her, here she is acting out and I had to give her special attention and be real nice and loving to her.

Early in the semester, Emily talked about respecting individual differences. Yet, she was resistant to dealing with Sarah in the way that Sarah needed.

Me and her would just like bump heads, and all she wanted was somebody to [talk to]...and she likes to talk real adult. She just wanted that. She wanted to feel that somebody was connecting with her.

Emily felt that Sarah was "disrupting everything." She stated, "The last thing that I want to do is go pat little Sarah." Mrs. Kent commented:

I don't think that Emily ever crossed that line of understanding with Sarah. Cause when you are dealing with kids like that, I believe, or I found effective for me, I have to first come down on them hard and then I have to get a rapport with them. But they have to know that the expectation is there but the rapport has to be there and it has to be a two-way street.

Not only did Emily talk with Mrs. Kent regarding Sarah, she also talked with her father.

I asked him about Sarah and he said, "Emily, make her your pet, give her little jobs, do these little things." And I thought, why should I have to do that for her, she is horrible. And he said, "Just do it because her attitude will change. It will change over time. And even if it doesn't, she won't be as bitter about you." And I never thought about that before. I never thought, "Do it just for her."

And the change was observably beneficial to both Sarah and Emily. They both appeared more at ease; the wall was coming down; the tug of war was ending. Emily started to establish a rapport with Sarah. No longer did Emily see Sarah as "the most manipulative child" or one who "take[s] advantage of any situation." Emily learned from her encounters with Sarah. As a result, in our last interview,

Emily stated, "You know, it is kids like that that have really made a difference in how I will handle kids."

Likewise, Sarah was no longer angry at Emily. Sarah was discovering that punishment was directly related to her actions.

Morgan had a different relationship with Sarah.

Morgan's strength was her patience. Mrs. Kent agreed:

I think that Morgan is much more effective with Sarah than Emily. Morgan has gotten more of a very good relationship with Sarah where "Let's talk about what the problem is...I'm trying to help you be good...so let's work on being good." I think that Morgan really did an excellent job at handling her.

On occasion, however, Morgan marked Sarah's behavior chart. This was an action that usually did not sit well with Sarah. When this occurred, Morgan usually knelt by Sarah and tried to reason with her. When Sarah was really difficult, Mrs. Kent talked to her privately.

An early journal entry revealed that Morgan expected differences in students' receptivity to school. She wrote:

When I teach soccer and cheerleading I realize that the majority of the kids are there because they want to be, and this may not be the case in all real school situations. This is why I believe that not just anyone can become a teacher.

Morgan's foresight and patience were the keys to her tolerance of Sarah. During one of Morgan's lessons, Sarah continually interrupted and complained, "I don't know how to do this," "I don't know what to start with," and "Why do I have to do this?" Morgan remained patient, kneeling and talking to her. Additionally, Morgan emphasized that the

activity would strengthen Sarah's research skills. Sarah finally settled down and worked. Sarah interrupted Morgan as much, if not more, than she did Emily.

In an effort to untangle the web of factors affecting students, Emily and Morgan discussed their discipline problems with each other. Morgan explained:

Emily and I rode together every day so on the way back that's all we did was talk about things that we encountered. She was very strong in discipline.

Emily confirmed their collaboration. During an interview, she stated:

Oh yeah! Me and Morgan talked about that all of the time. That's all we talked about. We were so connected with those kids. We really took ourselves very seriously in there.

Emily and Morgan also reflected individually and they talked with Mrs. Kent. Mrs. Kent had been a special education teacher for many years and Emily and Morgan felt that they learned how to handle discipline problems from her. For example, Morgan wrote, "I watch Mrs. Kent handle trouble behaviors. It doesn't seem like a big task. She makes everything so relaxed."

Emily's journal contained the following entry:

Some of the students' behavior surprises me and I reflect privately and discuss with Mrs. Kent methods for handling such behavior.

During one of our interviews, Emily added:

I have a little bit of a tendency to sometimes be a little too sharp. I never see Kent do that, never. And as stern as she gets with them, it is never anything that goes over the line. And she's really helped me



with that. She's really given me the sense that kids are really people.

In addition, Emily talked with her father about the various discipline problems that she encountered in her classroom. Neither preservice teacher was willing to passively accept what they perceived as behavior problems. Their probing was contrary to Jackson's (1968) finding that teachers were guilty of oversimplification, that is, willingly accepting simple explanations for complex phenomena.

### The "gatekeeper role"

Emily and Morgan were focused and viewed school as serious business. Both preservice teachers valued education and believed that a good education was the key to a better life. Like most teachers, they also associated good behavior with learning - they went hand in hand. However, in many instances, Emily and Morgan assumed a different presence in the classroom. This was primarily due to their personalities, their perceptions of children, and their tolerance of noise.

Emily appeared stricter and less tolerant of noise and movement than either Morgan or Mrs. Kent. They differed in their enforcement of the "gatekeeper" role (Jackson, 1968, p.11).

Jackson (1968) described the "gatekeeper" role (p. 11) as teachers deciding who could talk and when. The "gatekeeper" role is not unusual for teachers but for Emily

this appeared to be a concern that was ever before her, almost an obsession. To Emily, learning required concentration and concentration often required absolute quiet. This quiet was a stark contrast to the usual buzz of group work. Emily described her students as "articulate" (they wanted to talk all of the time), a quality that she felt caused most of the problems in her class. Emily expected her students to be focused and serious about school just as she had been as a student.

Emily was energetic, serious, and in charge. She expected students to be as serious about school as she had been as a student. Emily recognized that her expectations for students were high. During an interview she expressed this concern:

Everyone always tells me that they see me as a middle school teacher but I just know that my expectations are so high I think that age group wouldn't be able to meet them. I would expect so much more maturity just because they are bigger.

Emily's journal stated that she was not bothered by the immaturity of her fourth graders. Yet, because her expectations were high, Emily was often disturbed by traits that were signs of immaturity in her students. She stated:

The immaturity doesn't bother me, just the teasing and cruel stuff. Teasing is the worst for me. Tattling is the second worst. Ok, I don't care if we are not in a straight line. I don't care about none of that. I don't care if they are not straight and tall for the pledge. Mrs. Kent was really meticulous about that...to me it was all right.

Teasing and tattling are signs of immaturity. They are traits that are very common in young children. Therefore, in a sense, Emily was bothered by her students immaturity. She was affected by many of the usual characteristics of her students.

Morgan was energetic but in a more relaxed way than Emily. Morgan realized that her students were young and often playful and immature. In her journal, she wrote:

I just want to laugh at some of these students. They are still, in actuality, 3rd graders and are very "whiny."

In one entry Morgan described the scene as students adjusted their chairs, and in another entry she wrote about the stubbornness of some students. These entries confirmed Morgan's beliefs about children.

...every student insisted on comparing the height of their new chair to the height of another person's chair. I felt like there were 25 Goldilocks in the class as I heard, "This one's too high," or "This one's too short."

Some of the students are so stubborn that their groups were not able to get past the first article because of one person in the group. In each of these groups there was one student who was upset about not getting their way so they crumpled up and threw away the work their group had already done.

Morgan was also bothered by tattling. She wrote, "These students also tell on each other a lot. This becomes very aggravating..."

In handling classroom situations, Morgan wrote that she tried to exhibit the same traits, patience and respect, that she admired in Mrs. Kent. Early in the school year,

Morgan watched as Mrs. Kent corrected two disruptive students. Morgan recorded:

At the beginning of class a boy was complaining that a girl pushed him, so Mrs. Kent pulled them aside and talked to them about showing respect towards one another.

Morgan was continually impressed with Mrs. Kent's "cool composure" and "fairness." Emily expressed the same sentiments. She stated, "She [Mrs. Kent] demands complete respect from them. But, they are real people in there and they feel like they are."

Mrs. Kent required students to show respect in several ways. This included not moving around while others were taking a test and listening when others were speaking. Before group presentations, Mrs. Kent reviewed the "audience rules" regarding what was required of a respectful audience.

Despite differences in the preservice teachers' teaching styles and approaches to discipline, the students performed equally well in their academic work. Also, despite differences in approaches, both preservice teachers expected their students to exercise some self-control and show respect for each other.

Neither preservice teacher was cruel or insensitive; I never saw either teacher humiliate a student. Many mornings as I watched Emily and Morgan, I thought about classrooms that I had observed where students were constantly belittled. I also thought about my own school

days when students were placed in the opening of the teacher's desk for punishment [I smiled when Ladson-Billings (1994) related the same occurrence in her schooling].

Emily frequently corrected inappropriate behavior with quick, verbal commands to individuals and to the whole class. She spent time monitoring the class by either walking around, kneeling by students' desks, or peering over her book as the class perused one of several novels that were read that semester. Sometimes, individual students were corrected privately as Emily stopped to talk softly to them at their desk. Of course, this was not completely private, for those in close proximity could usually hear. Still, it was not the same as being embarrassed in front of the entire class.

"Don't get chatty," Emily frequently admonished the class. On some days, she seemed to say this every few minutes when there was the slightest hint of talking. On the surface it appeared that Emily's demeanor was an attempt to control the students by being the dominant figure in the room. But, as I moved beyond what she was saying and examined the underlying attitude, I found that this was not a case of personal power. Often Emily's warnings were cushioned with statements that let the students know that silence would benefit them. These statements usually came a few seconds after the warning.

For instance, Emily stated, "Don't get chatty. Let's give everybody a chance to think." "Don't get chatty. Someone is still working."

During a lesson on fractions, Emily encouraged the students to "speculate and hypothesize." She also cautioned them: "Don't say anything because some people need to think, I know I do."

On one occasion Emily seemed particularly annoyed with the students' talking and lack of self-control. Mrs. Kent interrupted and explained to the class (and perhaps also to Emily) that "some students who don't understand stop focusing just when they need to focus harder." In this instance, inattention was probably not simply a lack of self-control, rather, a sign of an absence of understanding. The students were noisy because they were not connecting with the new information.

During the few days that I observed Morgan's teaching, I was constantly aware of the higher noise level (during one of our conversations, Mrs. Kent called it "productive noise"). Mrs Kent stated:

I did not realize that Morgan had such an ability to control the kids without being, I don't want to say aggressive...But she is much more calmer...And she gets it [control] through her wait time and expectations.

Morgan generally used more subtle corrections than Emily. This included a touch on a student's shoulder, a gentle touch on a student's leg indicating that he was to

take his leg off the desk, a stern look followed by a whispered, "sit," or a move toward the students. She gave brief warnings and words of high expectation. For example, the first day that I observed Morgan, she began by telling the students that she had planned "lots of fun things" but they could only do them if "they were mature and act really responsible." She continued:

I know that you all can do that. But if you don't I won't hesitate to cut out all of the fun things...But I know that this is not going to happen. I know that you can behave.

During this time, Morgan also showed the students various "rewards" [incentives] that would be given out at the end of the day. She expected and wanted the students to use self control. Yet she realized that some students needed extrinsic rewards. According to Morgan, the rewards "will go to quiet students, not just those who get temporarily quiet." Morgan also emphasized that she had enough rewards for everyone. She had high expectations for all students.

Morgan often related good behavior to participation in exciting activities. For example, as the students busily searched for their science books Morgan tells them that they will start something new in science.

Morgan: Everyone get still so we can start.

Sarah: Is it going to be fun?

Morgan: It could be if you behave!

Morgan regulated movement and controlled noise by assigning jobs to various students. For example, each

group of desks had one person who served as "supply person." The supply person was responsible for retrieving and returning all materials that were needed by the students in the group. Each student had the opportunity to be the supply person several times during the school year. Not only did this serve Morgan's need for order, but also gave the students responsibility.

One of Morgan's talks regarding behavior took place on a morning when many visitors were at West End. Morgan remarked:

Everyone be on your best behavior. We have visitors in the building. I have been with you all year and you know what I expect from you.

Students responded differently to Morgan's warnings. However, this particular admonition prompted inquiries from several students. Eric asked, "Why do we have to have visitors?" Morgan explained that visitors were in the school because West End was being considered for a technology award. She further noted that this was "quite an honor for our school." Sarah inquired, "Will the kids get an award, too?" Sarah's question seemed to intimate that students should be rewarded for their compliance with the rules and for their contribution to West End.

Emily and Morgan frequently encouraged the students to use self-control. "If someone is talking to you, just ignore them," Emily tells Tara as Tara points to Amy (indicating that Amy is to blame for the disruption).



Morgan also encouraged independence, cooperation, and self-control when you ordered two students to work out their differences, "Go work it out with Van," she stated. On another occasion, three students having difficulty working cooperatively, complained to Morgan. "I don't want to hear that. Work it out," Morgan stated emphatically.

At the start of a reading lesson, Morgan discovered that there were not enough novels for each student. One boy was allowed to move near another student. "Make a wise choice," Mrs Kent cautioned as the boy sat by his best friend. "Do you think that's a wise choice?" she continued. The boy shrugged his shoulders and sat down by his friend. Mrs. Kent's interruption emphasized independence, self-control, and decision making. The two active boys remained quiet throughout the reading period.

Emily found it helpful to include students in the lesson to ensure that they were quiet and complied with the rules. For instance, Emily often said, "Okay Sarah, you may read next." During an interview, Emily explained why she frequently included Sarah in reading activities. She stated:

Reading is her thing. And I'm thrilled that she is paying attention because so many times, as you can see back there, she is drawing and she is [Emily hums and looks up and around in a mocking way] and not doing her work. When we read, she follows.

Morgan, too, included students in the lessons to get and hold their attention. With Morgan there was not a

great amount of verbal communication of behavior expectations. There were few speeches. Yet, by encouraging the students to participate, she connected behavior and learning. A few of Morgan's favorite sayings were "I'll continue when you stop," and "I'm waiting on you. Sit straight and tall." [This reminded me of my own teaching. Somehow, good posture went along with learning.]

Emily included cautionary words in her feedback statements. For example, "Sarah, I enjoy your participation but we can't get out of order."

Emily: What does vegetation mean?

Sarah: A kind of plant.

Emily: Well Sarah, that's right but you didn't raise your hand.

Sarah: Oh! [grabs her head as if disgusted with herself].

These types of statements reminded Sarah and her classmates of the rules. Emily felt that her students needed constant reminders. She stated:

It is a lot of routine, it is a lot of remembering that this is the way we do it. They need to be told that. It is like, even before we work in collaborative groups we will say before, "Who can model the way we do this?" Because if not, it is free for all!

Both preservice teachers used the discipline clipboard to maintain order. The discipline clipboard was a tool used to maintain a record of students who followed the rules. Students received special treats for appropriate behavior.

Emily and Morgan combined praise and the discipline clipboard to obtain compliance. Emily stated, "Danielle, thanks for raising your hand. Let me give you a check. Who else has been consistently raising their hands?" On another occasion, Emily held the discipline clipboard as she called the names of students who were listening. She emphasized that it was important to listen, especially since over half the class had failed the test. Similarly, Morgan remarked, "I see Danielle and Chad are doing what they are supposed to do after they have finished their spinners. They will get a check."

Teachers cannot always tell the attentiveness of students by their outward appearance. Students who appear attentive may or may not be. In fact, when Emily shared an anecdote about Rick her comments reflected the difficulty of interpreting behavioral signs. As Emily put it:

...it's funny 'cause you know Rick didn't even pay attention to the story when I was telling it. It was like he was picking stuff off his sweater and tying his shoe and I was like "Oh God, there goes my research paper, listen to me kid." But he went on and on about it [the story].

Other students, I am sure, "faked attention," what Jackson (1968) called "surface conformity" (p.102).

Several times, various students demonstrated their desire for quiet and order. "In a sense, they took on the "gatekeeper" role. They seemed to have made the connection between behavior and learning. For example, before one of Morgan's lessons, a boy yelled, "Y'all better be quiet. She

said we are going to do a lot of experiments." Also, before a science test, a girl screamed, "Be quiet." This was followed by a sea of "shhhhhhhhh!" On another occasion, Morgan stood before the class with one hand on her hip and the other on the board. As she peered over the class, one student yelled, "She's waiting."

On my last day at West End I asked a few students about the preservice teachers - what would they remember about them. One boy stated, "I liked Miss Clay because she was very strict and it teaches us for fifth grade. I thank her for that."

Both preservice teachers continually showed concern for their students and high expectations for their involvement in their lessons. This concern naturally extended to monitoring the students' behavior. The preservice teachers concern also extended to other students in the school. I use Emily as an example. In addition to being devoted to her class, Emily felt a commitment to all students. I first recognized this one cold, wintery morning as everyone stood outside during a fire drill. When the bell rang, and everyone rushed inside, I watched as Emily corrected a group of boys at the end of another class. The teacher of that class had rushed inside and the boys at the end of the line were still outside turning somersaults.

I was impressed when I saw that and I thought, "This is a real teacher who feels a responsibility to all students." When I got back to my chair in the classroom, I jotted down those sentiments in my field notes and shared them with Emily during our next interview. In response, Emily stated, "I do feel that I have that responsibility. That's a part of me that fits right in with teaching."

### Summary

In this chapter I presented Emily and Morgan's beliefs and practices related to teaching, students, and their role as teachers. The data included information gleaned through interviews, participant observation, field notes, and documents (e.g. reflective journals, self-evaluations, lesson plans).

Emily and Morgan's beliefs and practices were influenced by numerous experiences and persons covering years from early childhood through their teacher education program. Influential persons included the preservice teachers' parents, teachers (primary through high school), university professors, cooperating teacher, and various personnel at the field experience site.

Emily and Morgan had high academic and behavior expectations for their students. The preservice teachers saw their classroom role as "motivators" and "guides." Through their lessons and interactions, Emily and Morgan

acknowledged the many forms of diversity in their class. They worked to instill within their students a sense of independence and also consciousness of the importance of school tasks.

Inconsistencies in the preservice teachers beliefs and practices were few and generally were related to the preservice teachers' inexperience in dealing with students' differences. Areas of growth were noted for both Emily and Morgan.

In the next chapter, I first summarize my study by delineating responses to my specific research questions. Next, I examine, interpret, and qualify the results in the discussion section. Finally, I draw implications from my study and recommend areas for future research.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this qualitative study I focused on the beliefs and practices of two elementary education preservice teachers at a large southern university whose teacher education program was based on principles established by the National Holmes Group. My research questions dictated the use of qualitative methodology. Proposed questions for this study were as follows:

1. What affects preservice teachers' expectations of students in a multicultural elementary school classroom?
2. How do preservice teachers communicate their expectations for students?
3. How do preservice teachers describe inconsistencies in their beliefs and practices?
4. How do students acknowledge preservice teachers' expectations?
5. How does pairing preservice teachers affect their ability to communicate their expectations of students?

This chapter begins with a summary of the findings reported in the data analysis chapter. This is followed by my discussion of the results. Finally, I present implications and recommendations for those concerned with

education for the twenty-first century. The research questions were explored through interviews, analysis of documents, and observations.

### Summary

1. What affects preservice teachers' expectations of students in a multicultural elementary school classroom?

Emily and Morgan's expectations for students were influenced by various experiences and factors from early childhood through teacher preparation. Factors identified in this study included influential individuals (i.e. the cooperating teacher, teachers from elementary school through college), their sense of efficacy, their perceptions of teachers' roles, family and community, the fourth grade students, the general atmosphere at West End, interactions with each other, and reflections on all of these factors.

During our interviews and in their journals, Emily and Morgan repeatedly praised and credited Mrs. Kent as having the most influence on their development as teachers. Both preservice teachers believed that Mrs. Kent was a teacher who was successful with all students. She had high expectations for her fourth grade students and also for the preservice teachers. Through extensive conversations and conferences, Emily and Morgan became cognizant of Mrs. Kent's beliefs about her students. As Emily and Morgan



worked closely with Mrs. Kent, they saw these beliefs put into practice.

Mrs. Kent helped Emily and Morgan understand the dynamics of working with children. By observing Mrs. Kent, Emily and Morgan's belief systems were challenged and enriched. By serving as their mentor, Mrs. Kent helped Emily and Morgan develop high expectations for all of the students. She helped them understand children's academic abilities and behavioral characteristics. Several times during the semester, Emily and Morgan mentioned that they were not totally aware of all that they had learned from Mrs. Kent, they just knew that her influence was great.

Emily and Morgan also credited various university professors with preparing them for the diversity in classrooms. For example, Emily felt that her expectations for herself and for her students were affected by Dr. Trotter, one of her college professors. Dr. Trotter taught children's literature courses, including multicultural children's literature. She was a "compassionate teacher" and a "promoter of multiculturalism." Dr. Trotter emphasized developing the ability to see information and students from multiple perspectives. Emily credited Dr. Trotter with helping her acquire these traits. Dr. Trotter helped Emily further develop a respect for diversity. Morgan acknowledged various gender courses and the teacher preparation program for raising her awareness of

differences and raising her expectations for her students. Morgan did not name specific individuals in the teacher education program.

Emily and Morgan remembered special primary and secondary teachers who helped shape their concept of a teacher. Emily recalled only one "influential teacher" before enrolling in college. This was her high school biology teacher who was able to inspire and motivate all of the students in her class. This teacher enabled Emily to see that it was possible to have high expectations for all students. Emily recalled that students who usually performed poorly in other classes did well in this teacher's class. Emily also admired this teacher's personality, her ability to connect with students.

Morgan had many outstanding teachers throughout her elementary and secondary years. Her first grade teacher was remembered for her sensitivity and concern in helping Morgan overcome a speech impediment. This experience helped Morgan become sensitive to student differences. Morgan's fourth grade teacher was a male; Morgan recalled his innovative lessons. She learned that students were excited about learning when lessons were interesting and when they were actively involved.

Emily and Morgan's expectations for their students were influenced by their own sense of efficacy as well as their perception of the role of a teacher. They both

believed that education was important and they believed that through their efforts they were capable of bringing about positive changes in their students. Emily and Morgan assigned great importance to their role in the academic process. They both saw themselves as "coaches" and "motivators," and they wanted to "inspire" and "make things meaningful."

Emily and Morgan had been successful in various teaching situations outside of the classroom and believed that they could bring the same success to the fourth grade classroom. They believed that if they worked hard and planned interesting lessons, they could help their students be successful. From early in her field experience, Morgan was aware that students might differ in their receptivity to school activities and situations.

Emily and Morgan's expectations also reflected their personal predispositions. Emily was "confident" in her ability to organize information and present lessons in innovative ways. She expected her students to be excited about learning. Morgan believed that her strengths were her "patience and perseverance." She expected to diligently provide needed support until students were able to work on their own.

Emily and Morgan came from middle class families in which education was emphasized. Both preservice teachers were good students and viewed education as key to a better

life. Emily, particularly, attributed her high achievement to her effort, not her intelligence. She believed that students could be successful if they were determined and worked hard.

Emily's parents were educators. Emily stated that her life was always influenced by "the political, personal, and professional issues surrounding education and educators." As a preservice teacher, Emily often discussed her teaching experiences with her father, particularly problems related to her students. From her father, Emily learned the significance of adopting "a real success oriented approach to teaching." She learned the importance of accommodating ability differences thereby enabling students to feel good about themselves.

Before arriving at college, Emily and Morgan differed in their experiences with individuals from diverse populations. Emily's experiences with racial, cultural, and economic differences enabled her to generally feel comfortable with diversity, including the diversity in the fourth grade class in which she completed her internship. Morgan's exposure to diversity was more limited before college. However, she was sensitive and receptive to differences.

Emily and Morgan's expectations for their students were also influenced by interactions with the students. Their degree of interest in various activities affected

Emily and Morgan. In most instances, they maintained high expectations for all students and remained committed to making each student feel important.

Emily and Morgan were influenced by the general atmosphere of "high expectations" at West End Elementary. Both preservice teachers stated that they were "amazed that they [teachers, principal and staff] take it so seriously." Emily and Morgan learned that even the most minute details were important when dealing with students.

Both preservice teachers valued the pairing that was an integral part of their teacher preparation program. This affect is described fully under question five. Emily and Morgan also believed that the reflective component of their teacher education program allowed them to continually analyze and refine their expectations about their students and teaching.

## 2. How do preservice teachers communicate their expectations for students?

Emily and Morgan communicated their expectations for their students through establishment of a supportive learning environment, lesson planning, verbal communication to students, grading practices, efforts toward independence, assistance, and non-verbal communication. First, Emily and Morgan both established rapport with the students by creating a warm, supportive learning

environment. They acknowledged and respected individual differences. They respected the worth of students as human beings and as capable learners.

Emily and Morgan communicated their expectations through their lesson planning. Communication of expectations began, indirectly, before Emily and Morgan taught their lessons. Emily and Morgan established their teaching goals and tried to plan "meaningful," interesting, and challenging lessons that actively involved the students. Emily and Morgan respected individual differences. As they planned, they provided opportunities for students to function in different, yet optimal ways. They altered lessons and planned variations in some lessons in order that all students would be successful. However, students were taught the same basic skills and information. Through their lessons, Emily and Morgan emphasized cooperation and often required the students to work collaboratively. This encouraged a sense of community rather than constant competition.

Emily and Morgan verbally communicated the expectations that were established. Before and during lessons, they talked about their belief in the potential of the students. Emily and Morgan reminded the students of the level of involvement that was expected. They gave feedback statements that recognized the students' contributions, praised their efforts, and corrected

incorrect information. They admonished students who were not involved and working to their potential.

The preservice teachers also communicated their expectations through their grading system. That is, students were often graded according to their potential. More capable students were expected to produce superior work, while lower ability students were graded more leniently.

Similarly, Emily and Morgan communicated their expectations by encouraging independence. They did not want "to do for the students what they could do for themselves." Emily, especially, emphasized that school was serious and that school work was not as easy as students believed it to be. Both teachers encouraged and pushed the students to do their best work. They also empowered them with learning strategies.

The preservice teachers offered assistance in the form of individual and small group help as another means of communicating their expectations. Offering assistance communicated the preservice teachers' desire to help the students succeed. It also sent the message that the preservice teachers believed in the potential of the students. Despite the fact that the opportunity to receive extra help was presented to all students, not all sought extra tutoring.

Finally, expectations were conveyed through non-verbal communications. Emily and Morgan were not afraid to be near the students nor hesitant to touch the students. They also had acquired the "look" or "stare" that expressed teacher expectations without a word being spoken. The "look" generally related to behavior expectations.

### 3. How do preservice teachers describe inconsistencies in their beliefs and practices?

Inconsistencies in beliefs and practices were few. However, when they were present, they were attributed to Emily and Morgan's inexperience in dealing with individual differences in students. The preservice teachers had high expectations for their students. However, in a few instances they believed they lacked the experience to interpret students' cues and respond in the most beneficial manner.

In addition, Emily attributed her inconsistencies to other factors. She believed that inconsistencies were due to her impatience and her tendency to hold the students to the same standards that she held for herself as a student.

### 4. How do students acknowledge preservice teachers' expectations?

The students acknowledged the preservice teachers' expectations through their responsiveness to them. The



students' work ethic and behavior demonstrated their understanding and compliance with Emily and Morgan's expectations. Through observation, it appeared that students were usually positively receptive to Emily and Morgan's expectations.

Students generally wanted to be involved in the lessons. Many appeared proud of their work and often talked about how smart they were. The majority of class assignments were completed in a satisfactory manner and within the desired time limit. On one occasion, a student questioned the fairness of an activity. The student felt that the assigned task was unfair because it was related to a field trip that was supposedly a "fun trip." The student did not appreciate connecting a fun activity to school work. As the semester neared the end, the students appeared to be working more independently.

The students were generally respectful of the ability and cultural differences in their classmates. In most instances, students readily assisted those who needed help. The students were quite aware of fairness and expected others to contribute according to their ability. The students worked well in cooperative groups. However, on a few occasions, some of the students complained about the group composition. Most complaints were related to students' personalities rather than students' abilities.

Some student actions could not be conclusively defined through observation only. For example, several times I observed students concealing incorrect answers by pretending that they had the right answers, I observed students changing answers while the teacher was not looking. I also saw students copying work from neighbors. Without talking to the students directly, I was not able to determine if the students behaved in this manner in order to please the preservice teacher or for other indeterminate reasons.

On occasion, students wanted to know how compliance with the preservice expectations would benefit them and how or whether they would be rewarded. On other occasions, students demonstrated their understanding of teacher expectations by taking on the role of surrogate teacher. That is, they voiced the same expectations as the preservice teachers, particularly in regard to discipline or behavior expectations.

By being involved in lessons, by being respectful of ability and cultural differences, and by serving as surrogate teachers, the students acknowledged the preservice teachers' expectations.

5. How does pairing preservice teachers affect their ability to communicate their expectations of students?

Emily and Morgan valued the pairing that placed them in close proximity and that enabled them to work collaboratively. Pairing encouraged interaction and conversation. Emily and Morgan often team-taught lessons that were planned jointly. They also observed each others' independently planned lessons. Emily and Morgan discovered new information about their students through their observations and discussions. The preservice teachers became dialogue partners. Both preservice teachers stated that they frequently discussed issues surrounding school, teaching, and their students. Their dialogue allowed them to reflect on their beliefs and practices by questioning their interactions with their students. They hypothesized, interpreted, and critiqued all aspects of teaching. These discussions helped them to better understand the students, make changes throughout the semester, and work more effectively with the students.

Both teachers recognized the differences in their personalities and saw these as real strengths. They felt that they complemented each other well. Emily felt that Morgan "taught her to be patient and accepting of students' qualities." Morgan credited Emily with helping her develop higher discipline expectations. In addition, Emily and Morgan felt that they were strong in different subject areas. Emily's strengths were in language arts, and Morgan's were in science and social studies. Pairing

allowed them to profit from the other's strong points and use what they learned from each other to benefit the students.

### Discussion

In this section, I discuss the research results in relation to previous research on teacher beliefs and practices. I also examine the influence of the cooperating teacher and the influences of pairing and reflection. Emily and Morgan's beliefs and practices were influenced by many factors from their childhood through their teacher preparation. However, Emily and Morgan's cooperating teacher had the greatest impact on their beliefs and practices.

Emily and Morgan were like many preservice teachers in that they were confident in their ability to teach. Their confidence translated into their sense of efficacy. Bandura (1986) suggested that efficacy beliefs are the single strongest predictors of individual's behavior. Emily and Morgan's sense of efficacy was high. They believed that education was important and they believed that they possessed the necessary skills to help their students learn. Both preservice teachers' sense of efficacy was demonstrated in the degree of involvement and interactions that they had with their students. Interviews, observations and journals revealed how their sense of efficacy influenced their attitude toward the

students and the effort expended in both planning and teaching.

In several ways, Emily and Morgan's beliefs and practices matched characteristics found in teachers who were successful and comfortable with minority students. For example, Emily and Morgan's beliefs and practices were representative of Winfield's (1986) "tutor" behavior. According to Winfield, teachers who were "tutors" believed that students could learn and they believed that it was their responsibility to help them be successful.

Similarly, my study revealed that Emily and Morgan exemplified several of the characteristics cited in Ladson-Billings' (1994b) study of teachers who were successful and comfortable with African American students. First, Emily and Morgan believed that all students could succeed. They did not have the same expectations for each student, rather, high expectations based on each student's capacities. There were no obvious practices that showed that the preservice teachers believed that students were inherently better students or learners based on their family background, social class status, gender, or exceptionality. In addition, they saw teaching as "pulling" knowledge from the students rather than merely dispensing information. Generally, they were not satisfied until students demonstrated that they understood the information. Emily stated that she wanted the students to

be able to "go on and on" about the lesson. Emily and Morgan often described their tasks as "motivating" and "inspiring."

Unlike the teachers in the Ladson-Billings (1994b) study, Emily and Morgan did not feel a connection with the community around the school for the fourth grade students were from various sections of the city. However, they both demonstrated a connectedness with the community constructed in the classroom.

Emily and Morgan's belief in the potential of all the students was contrary to earlier research findings that teachers' expectations were based on factors such as social class (Baron, Tom, & Cooper, 1985; Clark, 1963; Ogbu, 1974; Persell, 1977; Rist, 1970); race (Oakes, 1985; Scott-Jones & Clark, 1986), and gender (Sadker & Sadker, 1985; Shakeshaft, 1986). My study shows that Emily and Morgan are similar to teachers in Paine's (1990) research whose expectations were based on individual student differences. As with Emily and Morgan, these teachers rejected relating expectations to categorical differences of social class, race and gender.

Emily and Morgan's experiences with the lower ability students strengthened Ashton and Webb's (1986) and Van Dyke, Stallings, and Colley's (1995) argument that students work toward teachers' expectations. Emily and Morgan acknowledged the successes of the lower ability students.

Throughout the semester, the preservice teachers planned interesting and challenging lessons for all students. Many of Emily and Morgan's successes with the lower performing students were based on adapting assignments. According to Brophy (1983), adapting assignments for slower students was a way of "offering the prospect of success with reasonable effort" (p. 208).

Emily and Morgan persevered despite their early difficulties with some of the lower performing students. Emily and Morgan's perseverance was unlike efforts made by preservice teachers in Vogt's (1990) study. Vogt studied preservice teachers who abandoned creative teaching practices with the lower performing students. Preservice teachers in Vogt's study perceived that the lower performing students were unwilling to handle creative tasks.

My findings support more recent studies (Burt, 1993; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990) that showed that preservice teachers were capable of exhibiting positive behaviors toward all students. Emily and Morgan exhibited more positive than negative behavior toward their students from other cultures. This was similar to the findings in Burt's (1993) study. In addition, Emily and Morgan's personal teaching efficacy increased as did the personal efficacy of the preservice teachers in Hoy and Woolfolk's (1990) study. I move now to other aspects of Emily and Morgan's beliefs

and practices; these are, the influence of the cooperating teacher and the influences of pairing and reflection.

Educators and researchers continually draw upon Lortie's (1975) label, "apprenticeship of observation", to describe the intensive training that preservice teachers receive before they even enter a teacher education program. Emily and Morgan's beliefs and practices surely held remnants of their own schooling experiences. However, their data revealed that they were most influenced by Mrs. Kent.

Metcalf (1991) reviewed the research on supervision of preservice teachers. Results revealed that, as with Emily and Morgan, preservice teachers credit the cooperating teacher with having the greatest influence on their professional development. In addition, Metcalf noted that preservice teachers' attitudes regarding teaching generally change in the direction of those of the coordinating teacher. Emily and Morgan demonstrated this as they emulated the beliefs and practices of Mrs. Kent.

Mrs. Kent was an excellent model and also a determinant of what fourth graders should know, how they learn, what could be expected. Mrs. Kent's emphasis on diversity probably caused Emily and Morgan to rethink some unexamined stereotypes. Mrs. Kent had been a teacher of special education students for many years. Her special



training enabled her to share with Emily and Morgan practices for working with students with special needs.

Educators often read about the negative socialization that takes place in schools; that is, experienced teachers initiate the new teachers by stressing the deficiencies of schools and education. Mrs. Kent, however, emphasized positive aspects of schools and students. She did not have a hopeless attitude. Despite the fact that at the start of the school year, Emily and Morgan heard a few negative comments about some of the students, they were more influenced by the pervasive school-wide climate emphasizing high expectations.

The collaboration with Mrs. Kent and between the preservice teachers led to better understanding of classroom events and altering of some expectations. In addition, collaboration and reflection enabled both preservice teachers to analyze, evaluate, and make voluntary adjustments in their beliefs and practices. This voluntary adjustment is similar to Armaline and Hoover's (1989) call for dislodging preservice teachers from beliefs rooted in their own experiences as students.

As the semester progressed, Emily and Morgan critically examined their students and the curriculum, and also their own beliefs and practices. They were aware of the significance of their own actions in the education of their students. In analyzing and explaining classroom

events, Emily and Morgan moved from single-factor explanations toward multifactor, interactive explanations (O'Keefe & Johnston, 1989). They were learning to be responsive to their students.

In this study, I attempted to peel away the layers that have made Emily and Morgan what they are today. Within the fourth grade classroom at West End Elementary, Emily and Morgan were exposed to many forms of diversity including, race, gender, social class, and exceptionality. By the end of the semester, they felt better prepared for the pluralistic student population of the 21st century. Emily and Morgan's belief systems were not only shaped by early background experiences, but by their encounters at West End Elementary School.

Early in my data collection, one of the researchers reading my first set of expanded notes, scribbled along side my data, "the heart of a teacher." This reference was to Emily. This truism described my first impressions as well. However, in order that I not arrive too quickly at "premature closure" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p.221), I filed it just below my level of consciousness until the write-up. Emily and Morgan possessed "the heart of a teacher."

As our school population becomes more diverse, having "the heart of a teacher" will necessitate teachers analyzing their fundamental attitudes, dispositions and

beliefs. In addition, and perhaps more important, teachers must analyze how these factors might influence their teaching and consequently their students' learning.

### Implications

The findings of this study have implications for teacher educators, preservice teachers, and in-service teachers (i.e. cooperating teachers and all other teachers). The findings highlight the value of teacher education programs that are grounded in reflective practice and that encourage critical reflection. As preservice teachers broaden their knowledge of subject content and acquire teaching strategies, there must be theory-practice integration (Henderson, 1992). Teacher education programs should also encourage and assist preservice teachers in critical self-analysis, that is, examining their assumptions about themselves, students, and structural elements involved in the education process.

Teacher educators must help raise preservice teachers' sensitivity to and comfort with the diversity that will be a part of schools in the next century. This goal cannot be achieved in a single course but must be infused throughout the curriculum. My study indicates that it is possible for preservice teachers to be comfortable with students unlike themselves.

Teacher education programs should provide opportunities for preservice teachers to work collaboratively during some of their field experiences. Collaboration can encourage dialogue and critical analysis of beliefs and practices. Reflection on the complexities of teaching can be enhanced through collaboration or pairing.

Because it takes several years to acquire an understanding of the complexities of classrooms, beginning teachers, and preservice teachers, should be provided with adequate support programs for the first years of teaching. Collaboration with peers and mentors is one way of facilitating this support during this time. Collaboration might help alleviate the teacher retention problem that plagues education. My study shows that collaboration provides an avenue for growth as preservice teachers learn from each others' strengths and weaknesses.

This study points out the importance of concerned, skilled teachers who value diversity to serve as mentors for teacher education students. Research indicates that supervisory personnel directly and indirectly influence preservice teachers. My study found that the cooperating teachers' influence was greater than the influence of "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975). Therefore, it is important to educate supervisory personnel (i.e. coordinating teachers) in the tenets of reflective

practice. It is imperative that all teachers, but particularly cooperating teachers, reflect on their own beliefs, and practices.

Lastly, because preservice teachers are influenced by the atmosphere in public school, teacher education programs and public school systems are encouraged to work jointly in the pursuit of excellence in teaching. Collegiality and two-way sharing of knowledge must replace competition between public schools and universities.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

As educators and researchers, we need to conduct longitudinal case studies to examine the long-term significance of teachers' beliefs and practices. A follow-up study on my two preservice teachers is desirable in order to determine if and how different settings influence beliefs and practices. Both preservice teachers are now teachers in public schools.

Replication of this study with preservice teachers in other settings (schools, grades) is recommended in order to gain additional insight into how beliefs influence practice. Additional research needs to be conducted that includes the voices of preservice teachers and in-service teachers. This will lend understanding to issues of teachers' practices.

Educators and researchers must examine more closely what Haysom (1985) called "the pupils' covert experiences" (p.110). They must examine what students are thinking and feeling. I frequently noted what students were visibly doing, their overt actions. Yet, their covert experiences were missing. I never discovered what was going on in their heads. I did not investigate their thoughts and feelings. Educators and researchers must look at the unobserved and undescribed.

Efficacy beliefs have been related to teaching practices, classroom climate, support of student initiative and concern for working with all students (Guyton, Fox & Sisk, 1991). Therefore, educators must study the efficacy beliefs of preservice teachers. As teachers are prepared for the twenty-first century, this information is not only desirable, it is crucial.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**CONSENT FORM**

October 5, 1994

Consent Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, volunteer to participate in the study on preservice teacher's beliefs and practices conducted by Thomasine Haskins Mencer of Louisiana State University. I understand that my identity will not be revealed and that my performance in this study may be used for additional projects. I also understand that I will be able to ask questions prior to the beginning and completion of this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX B**  
**SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Biographical Data

1. Please tell me about yourself, about your background.

Tell me about your family.

2. What are your memories of elementary school? Middle school? High school?
3. Tell me about your special teachers. What were they like?
4. How did you decide to become an elementary teacher rather than a middle or high school teacher?
5. When did you know that you wanted to be a teacher?
6. What have been your experiences with diverse populations?
7. What are some of the things that you have learned from these experiences with diverse populations?

### Beliefs and Practices

8. Tell me about your early impressions of the students that you work with at West End.
9. Tell me about inclusion at West End.
10. What can you tell me about the students (in the class) from other countries?
11. Tell me about Sarah.
12. How would you describe the first lesson that I observed?
13. How would you define a traditional lesson?

14. How do you compare it to your literature based lesson?
15. I noticed that the students are in groups at the centers. Tell me about these groups.
16. Is there flexibility - can they move up?
17. Have the groups stayed stable since you have been there?
18. What strategies are you using with Sarah?
19. Earlier you talked about a student who was similar to you as a child. You wanted to handle him in a different way than your teacher had handled you. How have you tried to deal with him differently?  
Prompt: What kinds of things have you consciously tried to do?
20. Why did you take time to talk to two students (named the students) about slavery?
21. Who or what has had the greatest influence on how you have evolved as a teacher?
22. How has West End impacted your teaching?  
Prompt: What have you learned about school from being at West End?
23. How has working with Mrs. Kent influenced your teaching?
24. What would you say is your philosophy of teaching.
25. How do you describe a good teacher?
26. How do you see your role as a teacher?
27. How do you tell when your students are learning,

comprehending?

28. What accommodations do you make in meeting the needs of various ability levels in your classroom?
29. What alternative ways of testing do you use?
30. How do your expectations vary for different students?
31. What are some perceptions students have about school?
32. Can you think of any reason why the African American students do not come for help?
33. In your own classroom, how do you intend to handle discipline?
34. How has pairing impacted your experiences in the classroom?

**APPENDIX C**  
**BIOGRAPHICAL DATA/AUTOBIOGRAPHY**



## BIOGRAPHICAL DATA/AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The biographical data and autobiography will aid the supervising teacher and the college coordinator in guiding the student during student teaching activities. One copy should be given to each.

1. Full name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle
2. Permanent address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip Code
3. Present address \_\_\_\_\_
4. Telephone numbers \_\_\_\_\_  
Permanent Present
5. Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_
6. Marital status \_\_\_\_\_  
Names/ages of children \_\_\_\_\_
7. Schools/colleges attended (elementary to present)  

<u>Name of Institution</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Dates</u>
----------------------------	-----------------	--------------
8. Extra-curricular activities in college \_\_\_\_\_
9. Employment during college \_\_\_\_\_
10. Employment while student teaching (type, hours) \_\_\_\_\_
11. Coursework to be taken concurrently with student teaching \_\_\_\_\_
12. Short-term/long term goals \_\_\_\_\_

**BIOGRAPHICAL DATA/AUTOBIOGRAPHY--Page 2**

Write an autobiographical essay in which you reflect on your own background and experiences. The autobiography should focus on your development as a student becoming a teacher.

The essay might include some or all of the following: reason for entering the teaching profession, qualities most important in a teacher, experiences in working with children, travel experiences, and specific talents/skills.

## VITA

Thomasine Haskins Mencer was born in Richmond, Virginia. She attended public schools in Richmond and graduated from Maggie L. Walker High School. In 1966 she received the Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Virginia State University. After graduation, Thomasine enrolled in the National Teacher Corps at the University of Georgia. In 1982, Thomasine received the Masters in Education degree in Supervision from Louisiana State University. Thomasine has also studied at the University of Tennessee and Virginia Commonwealth University.

Thomasine has worked as a classroom teacher in Atlanta, Nashville, New York City, and Baton Rouge. She has worked at Louisiana State University as a student teacher coordinator. Thomasine is currently a member of the clinical faculty at Louisiana State University. She is an instructor in language arts and multicultural education courses.

Thomasine's area of concentration for her doctoral work was Curriculum and Instruction with a focus in Teacher Education.

# DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

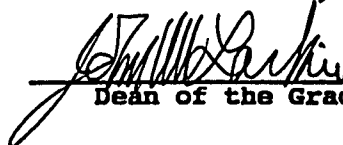
**Candidate:** Thomasine Haskins Mencer

**Major Field:** Curriculum and Instruction


**Title of Dissertation:** Reflection on Teaching: An Ethnographic Study  
of Preservice Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

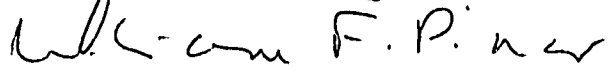
**Approved:**


  
Major Professor and Chairman


  
Dean of the Graduate School

**EXAMINING COMMITTEE:**

  
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**Date of Examination:**

March 22, 1996